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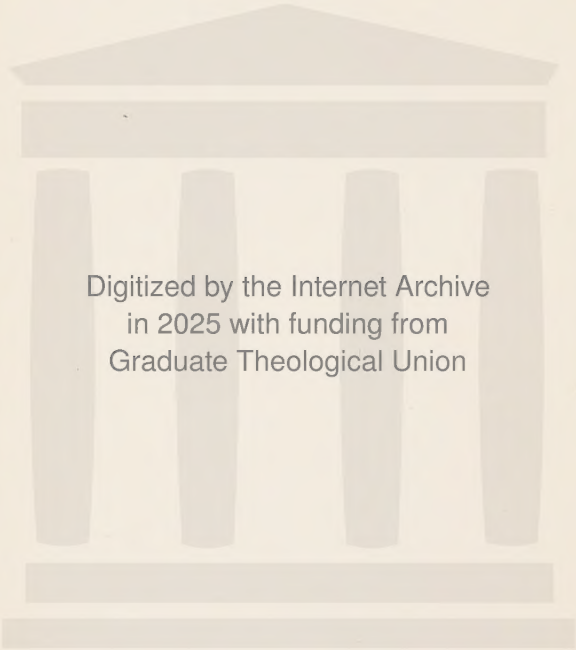
STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL FOR SOCIETY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STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL FOR SOCIETY

BY

H. A. MESS, B.A.

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"CASUAL LABOUR AT THE DOCKS" AND "THE FACTS OF POVERTY"

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PREFACE

A GREAT many friends, including most of my colleagues, have given me help in the preparation of this book; they will not think me unappreciative if I do not refer to them individually.

Use has been made of articles contributed to *The Baptist Times*, *The Christian World*, *The Student Movement*, and also of pamphlets written at different times for use in student circles.

H. A. MESS.

November 1923.

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STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL FOR SOCIETY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

SINCE this book is intended to be a contribution, however slight, to Christian sociology, it will be well to begin by explaining in what sense that term is taken.

Professor Shailer Matthews in his well-known book, *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, speaks deprecatingly of those who tack a little Bible teaching on to a number of judgments which they themselves have formed about present-day conditions, and call it Christian sociology. He would confine that term to an exposition of what Christ actually taught about society.

Let us acknowledge that he is giving a much-needed warning and rebuke. We ought to be careful that we do not first form our opinions and afterwards go to our religion to see what can

be found there to support them. This is only too often done, and it is notoriously easy to discover aspects of the teaching of our Lord and detached sayings, which seem to give support to many different kinds of theory. It is our Lord's whole philosophy and spirit which must be our test and guide, and we need to discover first what that is, and afterwards to find its bearing on present-day problems.

It is also clear that it is valuable to have an analysis of what our Lord actually thought and taught about social questions. But it does not follow that we are obliged to confine the use of the term Christian sociology to that alone. It would seem rather that it can be fairly and usefully applied to describe what men seeking to live in the spirit of Christ think about the social problems of their own time. Darwinism does not mean simply what Darwin thought and taught; it is wider than that, it includes the conclusions arrived at by contemporaries and successors of Darwin who have applied his methods to conditions and to information which were not within his knowledge.[1] It was the express teaching of our Lord that His

[1] Thus Professor J. A. Thomson writes: "We mean by Darwinism, not the *ipsissima verba* of Charles Darwin, but the living doctrine that has legitimately developed from his central idea . . . a doctrine which is in process of assimilating a multitude of new facts. . . ." *Secrets of Animal Life*, p. 226.

disciples were to use their own judgments and that they should do greater things than He could accomplish. He did not, as Mohammed did, attempt to be a lawgiver for all time; rather He strove to convey a spirit which should enable men in all ages and in all circumstances to judge for themselves and to judge rightly. Christian sociology is for us what we, enlightened by the teaching and example of Christ, think about present-day problems.

There are some who deny the possibility of a useful Christian sociology on the ground that an uneducated peasant from an obscure province of the Roman Empire could in the nature of things give no guidance which would be of value to us as we face the complexities of a civilisation of which He never dreamed. "If Christ came to Chicago?" it has been queried, and the retort has been made, "If Christ came to Chicago, He would see something He had never seen before, and that is a great city."[1] The implication is that He would be utterly bewildered in a new world and that He would be unable to be of any assistance to men in solving its problems. But it is at least as plausible to surmise that He would very soon begin to understand it and to pass upon it such pregnant judgments as He passed upon the society of His own day.

As a matter of fact, Christ was not the ingenuous

[1] Quoted by Dr. Bosanquet: *Suggestions in Ethics*, p. 119.

rustic whom some[1] would picture; Nazareth was not a sleepy village in an out-of-the-way corner, but a considerable town in a busy and populous district. One of the great traffic routes of the world ran close by, and Galilee was a meeting-place of many nations and of many cultures. The tendency may be to exaggerate just now the advantages and the importance of Galilee and of Nazareth, but it is clear that it gave to one who was observant and reflective the material for judgment as to the society of the time. And if Christ had been born in one of the smaller industrial towns of Illinois in 1900 or thereabouts, and had grown up to manhood there, visiting sometimes the great city of the state, would He not have had a message to Chicago and to the world of to-day? That is what we have to find out. We must have, as far as may be, the spirit of Christ, His outlook on God and on man and on the world about us; and in so far as we approximate to His spirit our judgments will approximate to what His judgment would have been had He been born two thousand years later.

Of course, the sincerity of a man's religion does not *per se* give him an understanding of social problems. A man may be an earnest Christian and a bad economist; his Christianity will not save him from making blunders if he speaks on economic questions, any more than it will make

[1] *E. g.* Renan.

him an expert chemist if he has not studied chemistry. Religion is brought into discredit if men dogmatise in its name on questions requiring special knowledge. The answers to economic questions must be given by economists, just as the answers to questions of chemistry must be given by chemists. But questions of chemistry may be, and economic questions usually are, bound up with questions of human relationships, which are ethical questions. Whether the mixture of certain chemicals will make a high explosive is a question on which the Christian as such has no right to speak; how the explosive, if made, shall be used may be a matter on which he ought to have a strong opinion. What would actually be the effects on the population of our country and on the populations of other countries of a protective tariff may be a very debatable point for experts in economics; whether those results are desirable, and should be obtained if possible, is largely a question of morals.

It may be helpful to suggest an analogy. Suppose that two engineering firms disagree and that the matter comes into the law-courts. The lawyers concerned, judge and barristers and solicitors, do not claim any right to pronounce on questions of engineering; they are guided as to them by the evidence of engineering experts; their concern is with the legal aspects of the case. So it is with

social controversies: on technical questions we have to be guided by technical experts, on the moral aspects we have to decide for ourselves. But it is worth noting that the lawyers, in order to be able to give a sound judgment on the legal aspects of the case, may have to acquire a considerable amount of elementary knowledge of engineering. It is one of the qualifications of a good barrister to be able to understand quickly something of the technique of many trades. So, too, if Christians are to decide rightly on the ethical issues involved in social questions, they must take the trouble to acquire at least an elementary knowledge of social science. The value of any judgment on social questions will depend upon the degree in which it combines accurate analysis with moral insight. And there can be little doubt that the Christian Church is suffering to-day because so many fields of human conduct have not been subjected to such a scrutiny. It is most difficult, for instance, to find men with the combination of technical knowledge and of moral insight to speak or to write with confidence and authority on the many ethical issues which must arise on our great commodity exchanges.

Sociology is usually defined as the study of human society: it includes both an examination of the phenomena and an attempt to interpret them. In this book Christian sociology is taken

to be an attempt to interpret the facts in the light of that conception of God and of man which Jesus Christ taught and illustrated.

The value of the judgment of any individual Christian will depend partly upon his information and upon his power of analysis, partly upon his spiritual insight. In view of the complexity of human affairs and our varying levels of spiritual attainment, it is inevitable that Christians should differ widely in their views on social questions. This should make us go warily and avoid hasty dogmatising. Yet we might reasonably expect some nearer approach to a common mind among Christians, and for lack of it the Christian Church is patently suffering. The world at large contemns and ignores the voice of Christianity on social questions; and very naturally, for it is not so much a voice at present as a babel. Christians are sometimes reproached for silence and sometimes for saying the wrong things, but surely the trouble more often is that different Christians say different things, and the conflicting advices cancel out.

The reason why there is so little common mind among Christians is that for a long time past there has not been sufficient attention paid to our thinking on social questions; we are in heavy arrears. Not enough time, not enough money, not enough ability, not enough care have been dedicated to it. If as much scholarship had been

put into thinking out a Christian sociology as has gone to the elucidation of the synoptic problem or to the dating of the books of the Old Testament, we should not be in our present weak position. There would still be doubts and differences, as there are doubts and differences among Biblical scholars or among biologists; but there would be a considerable consensus of opinion and a heavy trend of thought, the kind of common mind which is found in any department of human knowledge to which serious attention is given. And indeed there are many signs of the emergence of a common mind on social questions, but we are still at a very early stage. And to the discussion I offer in humility my own small contribution.

There is one line of thought in this book to which I should like to call attention at the outset and for which I will attempt a justification. It is obvious enough that religious thought and feeling have been swinging away of late from an exaggerated and unhealthy individualism. That a collective outlook is needed is generally agreed. But it is not perhaps so clear what is meant by a collective outlook. It is not simply that there can be no satisfactory personal religion which does not flow over into an interest in the well-being, material as well as spiritual, of our fellow-men : that is widely accepted to-day. What is important, and what is not yet generally realised, is that Christianity

is a way of life for communities as well as for individuals.

It is probable that some of my readers will contend that the character of a community or society is simply the sum of the characters of the individuals who compose it, and that it is better or worse just as they are better or worse. But this is not so. The mind of a community is indeed the resultant of the thinking and feeling of the individuals who compose it, but of their thinking and feeling influenced by their association for a common purpose and by the traditions of common action in the past. "The average type of the Frenchman existing to-day," writes Mr. McDougall in *The Group Mind*,[1] "does not adequately represent the French national character, because each people has a history and ancient traditions, and is composed, as it is said, of the dead even more than of the living. The French national character resumes the physical and social actions that have been taking place through centuries, independently of the present generation, and imposes itself upon this generation through all the national ideas, the national sentiments and national institutions." In the same way a public school or one of the older universities has obviously a character which is in considerable measure independent of the characters of those who happen to be passing through it at

[1] P. 107.

any particular time. The legal profession, the Stock Exchange, the commercial world, have similarly their traditions and their institutions. Men are often either better or worse than the traditions and institutions by which their conduct is largely moulded. That is why it is necessary to alter systems and institutions as well as individuals in order to alter the character of a community.

In the course of conversation with a friend some time ago I remarked that it was hard for rich nations, as for rich men, to enter the Kingdom of Heaven; and after a puzzled pause he replied that he did not understand in what sense a nation could be said to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet the ideas of collective sin, collective repentance, collective righteousness, collective salvation are deeply embedded in the literature of our religion. The messages of the Hebrew prophets were addressed far more to nations than to individuals; indeed the conception of the worth and destiny of the individual came late in Jewish thought. "The burden of Moab," "the word of the Lord to Nineveh," "when Israel went astray": we are familiar with such phrases.[1] Christ addressed

[1] "The call to repentance was addressed primarily not to the individual but to the nation as a whole. The covenant of Jahweh was with Israel conceived as a personality with a continuous moral life, and therefore responsible alike for its sins and for its amendment." Article on "Repentance" in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

His message to communities as well as to individuals.

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets." . . . In several of the parables [1] it is clearly the Jewish nation which is typified. He obviously hoped at one period of His ministry that the nation, not individual Jews merely, might undergo a change of heart and accept a new way of life.

Of course Christ and the prophets did not use the language of a modern social psychologist who is exploring the nature of collective consciousness, collective thought, collective will; just as they did not use the language of a modern biologist or of a modern theologian. But we did not need the analyses of Graham Wallas, of Maciver, of McDougall, and of others, grateful though we are to them, to tell us that communities and societies are capable of moral phenomena just as individuals are. We speak popularly of a guilty nation, of a short-sighted council, or even of the traditional stinginess of a cricket club in its dealings with its employees; and most of us realise that we are doing something other than passing judgment on a number of individuals.

But it would only be falling into another error

[1] *E. g.* the Parable of the Husbandmen (Matt. xxi. 33–43); the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (Luke xiii. 6–9).

if we supposed that the character of a community and the character of the individuals who composed it could be entirely distinct. It is not likely that a community or society made up of generous men could habitually and indefinitely behave ungenerously; nor will most men be or remain generous if they are members of a community or society which habitually behaves ungenerously. There is constant give and take between the morality of the individual and the morality of the community, an interaction as vital as that between a mother and her unborn babe.

I have tried, therefore, in this book to bear in mind consistently that all the conceptions of the Christian religion need to be worked out in relation to societies and communities of all kinds as well as in relation to individuals.

CHAPTER II

GOD MADE THE WORLD

It is not easy for us to-day to realise the first significance of the word "gospel," and it is well if we carry our thoughts back often to those great days when Jesus was going round the villages of His native land proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God. The "good news" was old news in a sense; the prophets had brought it repeatedly to the people of Israel; but the message had never been delivered with such tremendous conviction or with such a tremendous personality behind it. It was that God, the ruler of the world, had a plan for His people, and that if they would seek to know it and to act on it, it would be well with them. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," says the first verse of our Bible, and in that sentence we have a gospel already. The world is not in the power of many capricious or malignant spirits, as terror-stricken races still believe in some heathen lands. Nor is it a dead machine grinding along without any consideration for human welfare, as materialists have thought. Carlyle has told us in a piece of spiritual

autobiography, woven into *Sartor Resartus*, what a gospel it was to him when he realised that behind the world there is the living God. "It must have been like the lifting off of a burden to say *I believe in one God, maker of heaven and earth*," says Edwyn Bevan in his *First Contact of Christianity and Paganism*.[1] That God made the world and that God rules it is the central teaching of Jesus, as of the whole Bible, and it gives us a firm basis for our social hopes and solid ground upon which we may build our social edifice. A good life is possible, since God rules.

I

Jesus taught that since God is the Creator and Father, the simple physical needs of men and women will normally[2] be met. Earthly parents

[1] In *Hellenism and Christianity*.

[2] The word "normally" is used advisedly, because I do not think that Jesus or the Christian religion teaches that men and even large communities of men will be exempt from physical catastrophes. There will sometimes be famines and floods and earthquakes in which men will perish just as birds and beasts will perish. But such catastrophes are exceptional and form a small part only of human life, and the suffering caused by them is becoming less as human foresight, knowledge and organising ability increase. The broad fact is that the earth is so constituted that the human race can live on it.

There is very little in the teaching of our Lord which bears directly upon that aspect of the problem of evil which natural catastrophes present. In the Old Testament famine and flood and earthquake are regarded as instruments in the hand of God for the discipline of the human race. Our Lord does

make provision for their children's needs, how much more will God do so! "Do not worry about food and clothing; God knows you need them. Find out what God wants you to do, and try to do it; and you will get the food and clothing you need, as well as the more important things." So we may paraphrase Matt. vi. 25–34.

There are many, even among Christians, who do not share His belief. They deny it implicitly by their actions and by their attitude towards life, even if they do not deny it explicitly. A great deal of trouble in the world of social relationships comes from the feeling that there are not enough of the good things of life to go round, that somebody must go short, and unless we struggle it is likely to be ourselves. The fear that the world's resources may be insufficient to supply all the nations is at the back of many wars and of much preparation for war: it is thought that there is not land enough for the white races and for the yellow races, there is not oil enough for Great

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not endorse this view, and He took trouble more than once to combat the prevalent idea that suffering was necessarily due to sin. He refers to famines several times, but without any discussion of their origin or meaning. He knows that such things happen, and the knowledge does not shake His faith in the power and goodness of God. What He does say about physical catastrophe is that God always knows about it and that He has the situation in hand: the sparrow does not fall to the ground without His knowledge and consent, the death of the body is not a final catastrophe for man (Matt. x. 28–31).

Britain and for America, there is not coal and iron enough for France and for Germany. Men and women do not really believe that God is able and willing to supply the needs of His children.

To encourage His disciples Jesus pointed to the birds and to the flowers, which are nourished and bedecked without the anxious scheming and the feverish excitement in which the time and energy of mankind are so largely absorbed. God knows their wants and He supplies them. He knows our wants, and we are dear to Him. Then why worry?

It is a fair argument, and one which is stronger to-day than when it was first used. If the earth will support birds, it will surely support men. Granted that our needs are greater than those of the animal creation, yet so too are our powers. Animals cannot develop the resources of the world, they cannot improve the fertility of the fields and produce new kinds of fruits and grains, they cannot link up distant continents, so that if one harvest fail the surplus of other lands may prevent famine. We men do all these things. And yet is man, for all his intelligence, so much better off than the brute creation? The birds have not got factories, joint stock companies, captains of industry, telephones, mammoth steamships, and all the other features of our civilisation. (Incidentally, they do not have neurasthenia or rest-cures either.) Some

of them will die of cold or of hunger in a hard winter, but for the most part they seem to have their wants supplied and to be happy. Certainly there is not the ugly and squalid misery among them which is found so widely among men. Charles Booth and other investigators revealed to us the fact that in this country great masses of people—not merely an unlucky few—were chronically underfed, spent pitiably little on clothing, and were very badly housed. Yet it might be reasonably supposed that men, with their skill and industry and organising ability, would find the supply of physical needs a comparatively simple matter.

One at least of the reasons for this failure has been that from lack of faith in God we have been over-anxious, and our anxiety has made us selfish. We waste what God has provided in the struggle to make sure of a supply for ourselves. Animals do the same kind of thing. Hogs will spill the food in their trough in their greedy efforts to get to it before their fellows. We do the same kind of thing on a bigger scale, as our lives are on a bigger scale. It is man's sin and folly which are to blame, and not any failure of God to provide, if there is scarcity as a result of laziness, of hardness of heart, or of refusal to co-operate. There was no need for men to starve in Russia whilst in Argentina they stoked furnaces with unwanted maize. It is not necessary for men and women and children over a large part

of Central and Eastern Europe to suffer miseries from shortage of clothing, whilst in our Lancashire and Yorkshire towns the looms are silent and the operatives are in the streets. God is not to blame if on railway or in coal mine work comes to a standstill because men cannot agree as to terms on which they will co-operate, or if industry as a whole is conducted extravagantly and inefficiently because of secrecy and jealousy and a paralysing sense of grievance.

We must, of course, face the position most clearly stated by Malthus, that the human race (like all other living species) is so fertile that its population tends continually to press upon the means of subsistence. Malthus pointed out that in every country and in every age the population has been kept down either by war, pestilence or famine, or else by deliberate action of one kind or of another to prevent fertility having its natural result in increase of population. Enormous infantile mortality prevails in many lands; and a high infantile mortality is still found among some classes in our own land, though it is rapidly diminishing. Infanticide is openly practised in China and elsewhere. In our own country procurement of abortion is far more common than is generally known; there is also the deliberate sterilisation of marriage. And there is abstention from marriage on economic grounds. The dilemma put at its

acutest seems to be between no marriage or imperfect marriage on the one hand, or on the other hand a population which is being killed off continually by some of the many ways in which deficiency of subsistence does kill. The dilemma is real and serious in our own country at the present time, and a large part of the population is impaled on one or the other horn.

The escape from the dilemma seems to lie in the reasonable supposition that the earth can support an increasing population provided that with the increase of population there is an increased mastery of the art of life, and in particular greater control of natural resources and greater skill in human association. During the last century advances in physical science and improvements in industrial organisation did permit an increase of population in Western Europe together with an improved standard of life. There is no reason to believe that we have reached the limits of scientific discovery, and there is good reason to think that we are mere beginners in the art of human association. The world cannot support in health and joy an increasing population of warring people, of jealous people, of stupid people, of sluggish or cowardly people. But that it could support—though not necessarily in those parts of it which are at present thickly populated—a much larger population of friendly, sensible and enterprising people there is little

reason to doubt. And it is the teaching of Christianity that God wants men to be loving, wise and brave.

And the problem of population is bound up obviously with the wider problems of sex relationship. Apart from economic considerations, there is still the question how large a family ought to be, and at what intervals children ought to be born. We most of us recognise to-day that women ought not to be worn out with overmuch and over-rapid child-bearing. And with the higher standard of education and the new civic responsibilities of women, it becomes at once more necessary and more difficult to achieve a right proportion between their home duties and the interests of the wider life into which they have entered. And there is the prior question, which is perplexing thousands and ought to perplex thousands more, how or whether the sex life of men and of women can be satisfactorily adjusted: there are not a few who say that it is impossible.

There are problems here which it is cruel to dismiss with an easy optimism or with a few moral platitudes. I shall not deal with them in detail, but I refer those who have a legitimate and earnest desire for guidance to the best books available.[1]

[1] *Marriage and the Sex Problem*, by F. W. Foerster; *Purity and Racial Health*, by K. L. and W. F. Lofthouse; *Men, Women and God*, by A. H. Gray; *Sex and Common Sense*, by

The best books, as their authors would freely admit, are not satisfactory, for we are all groping in these matters. The conspiracy of silence has prevented until recently the necessary honest thought and discussion. The age-long subjection of women to men has perverted our natures. The atmosphere of our social life is overcharged with sexual suggestion and stimulation.[1] A clean and satisfactory sex life is not easy to achieve, and what ought to be natural and beautiful is smirched for only too many of us. Many men assume that there is an insoluble dilemma: they say quite frankly that continence is impossible, that the needs of men and of women are different, and that either men must be sacrificed to women or women to men. But such a creed of despair is not for Christians. Sex is not an unnecessary and embarrassing complication in life, as we are sometimes provoked to think in view of

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Maude Royden. On the question of population see A. M. Carr Saunders, *The Population Problem;* Adelyne More, *Fecundity versus Civilisation;* and the Reports of the National Birth rate Commission, *The Declining Birth-rate* and *Problems of Population and Parenthood.* The vexed question of birth-control is discussed in this last-named book. See also *The Control of Parenthood,* edited by Sir James Marchant, which gives in more popular form the main evidence and arguments brought before the Commission.

[1] Contrary to what is usually supposed, the sexual appetite would appear to be less strong and less insistent among savages than among civilised men. There is some evidence also for a rutting season amongst primitive men. See Carr Saunders, *op. cit.,* chapter v.

the difficulties and disasters connected with it;[1] it is part of the divine plan for the welfare of men. We believe that God made us male and female and bade us be glad in one another and multiply, and that God does not put us in impossible situations. We must believe that God intended sex life to fit into the harmony of life as a whole, that what meets the real needs of men meets the real needs of women, and that it will issue in a healthy, happy brood of children. And it is at least a plausible surmise that if we found out what was right physically and psychically for the family, we should have found out also what was right economically and socially for the community; that the rate of increase of population would run parallel with increasing ability to utilise the resources of the earth.

II

Our discussion has already taken us from a consideration of the external world to a consideration of the nature of man. Man lives in a world which

[1] "I could be content that we might procreate like trees without conjunction, or that there were any way to perpetuate the world without this trivial and vulgar way of union."—Sir Thomas Browne.

A modern novelist, Mr. W. J. Locke, writes:

"'What is sex?' asked Carlotta.

'It is the fundamental blunder of Creation,' said I."

The passage is flippant, but it expresses what a good many people think seriously.

we believe to be good because we believe that it was created and is ruled by God; but what of man himself? The answer is the same. God created man. He had a good purpose in doing so and He has not abandoned that purpose. The very conditions of man's nature allow him to thwart the will of God; equally they allow him to ally himself with it.

Clearly Jesus had a great belief in the noble capabilities of the human race. The idea of the Fatherhood of God was not new nor even peculiar to the Jews. But it was more habitual with Jesus than with any other great teacher up to that time; its implications were more closely pressed home by Him; there is a higher conception of the God who is our Father, and therefore a higher conception of the nature of man. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. . . . Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." A family resemblance is the natural thing. But in the moral sphere it is not inevitable; it has to be willed.

Jesus assumed that men and women could be good if they wanted to be. There is nothing in that which conflicts with a doctrine of grace. The

power to be good is a gift of God to men. But the same is true of every other good which men enjoy; they are all gifts of God. What a man needs to do is to make an act of faith, to draw upon the power which God is waiting to give him. To the sinful as to the sick, Jesus said, "Believe and be whole." He did not underrate the weakness and corruption of men, but He pointed to God always at hand, always ready to forgive, to cleanse, to illumine, and to enable them to do better. Nor does He seem to have thought it possible for one here and one there merely; He thought it possible for the great mass of men; and He thought it possible for communities, for Chorazin or Bethsaida or Jerusalem, for the Jewish nation. "Repent and believe," was His message to one and to all; and it is clear that in the early days of His ministry, at least, He thought it possible that His nation might turn to God—a firstfruits of the gathering in of the nations. Later on He seems to have had glimpses of a long, weary night of history before the dawning of the day. But of any obstacle to man's turning to God, except man's own unwillingness, He seems to have been unaware. "The last word of Jesus concerning man's sin and its origin remains that uttered over Jerusalem: *Ye would not.*" [1] But "ye would not" implies "ye could," and for us "ye can."

[1] Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, p. 96.

Many men and women, including many Christians, have no real belief in the possibility of a better order of society. They think that selfish motives must always be the mainspring of industry; that the nations will always stand armed and watchful against one another. In their judgment men and women are not only greedy and quarrelsome but they are likely to remain so. And believing this, they are not of much use in the fight against evil. They may not succumb to it themselves, but they will not attack it with any conviction. They play into the hands of the positively bad men. Such people justify their scepticism by a reference to "human nature." But it was exactly on His belief in "human nature" that Jesus based His tremendous optimism. He was not blind to the sin and folly of men; indeed He saw their depth and extent and harmfulness as no one else has done; but He believed that God had made man capable of becoming like Himself.

III

It is one of the miseries of polytheism that the claims of the different gods or spirits upon men cannot be reconciled; if a man please one he may offend another;[1] there is no single ruler of the

[1] *E. g.* Euripides' *Hippolytus:* to please Artemis is to displease Aphrodite.

universe, and men are denied the strength which comes from a realisation of the unity of life and the possibility of bending all one's powers to a single end. Something analogous befalls those in our day and in our land whose trust in God is not thoroughgoing; they try vainly to divide life into areas over which His rule is admitted and into areas to which it does not apply. Christianity, it is suggested, is excellent in domestic relationships, but it is out of place in the world of business. To be truthful is wisdom as well as virtue in the home, but it is of more doubtful value on the Corn Exchange. "Love your enemies" is a good rule between man and man, but not between nation and nation. The Sermon on the Mount is sublime, but inapplicable to the government of Ireland. But all this, if not a lapse into polytheism, is at all events something less than monotheism: it means that God is not thought to be the supreme ruler of the world. And if that be true, there is no gospel for society; and we can only make the best of a bad job. But that is not the Christian faith: the Christian faith is that the supremacy of our religion "extends to all social organisations, to all civil compacts, to all imperial designs, no less than to all doctrines of God and the single soul." [1]

Many fears, some of which have accompanied the human race throughout the ages, and some of

[1] Westcott's *Social Aspects of Christianity*, p. 6.

which are peculiar to our own day, are brought into subjection when the nature and sovereignty of God are apprehended. There is the sense of feebleness and of loneliness which comes over us when we contemplate the tremendous forces of Nature and the immensities of space: [1] it is as old as the human race and older, but the telescope has perhaps given to it new form and poignancy. There are many who are disheartened when they think of the laws of heredity and of the burdens which may be fastened upon a man before he is born. The new psychology of the unconscious perturbs some. Others feel that there is something hostile and inexorable in the laws of economics. But if the universe is God's home for us, our fears are only those of the small child whimpering in the shadows and the silence of the nursery. The laws of heredity and the laws of economics, so far as they are really laws and not our hasty generalisations, are God's ordinances for the good of His universe. And since our unconscious lives derive from God as well as our conscious lives, we may be quite sure that God is looking after them and that He is not careless of their hygiene.

There is one more pessimism which we ought to consider in the light of the teaching of Jesus about God. It is the peculiarly painful doubt of many

[1] For expressions of it in literature see Jack London's *White Fang* and Thomas Hardy's *Two on a Tower*.

intelligent and sensitive men in our own time, whether the human race is capable of the knowledge and the wisdom necessary to sustain the vast, increasingly complex, interdependent society which has come into being. Graham Wallas touches on this fear in his *The Great Society*.[1] It seems impossible to find statesmen or administrators capable of comprehending and co-ordinating the activities of the whole human race; yet the necessary task already approximates to that. Sometimes it seems as if all of us, statesmen and peoples, were in a car which had got out of control and was dashing along unguided at a dangerous pace. Yet any permanent return to a day of simpler and smaller problems is out of the question, and even a temporary return is only likely to happen as the result of a disastrous breakdown of civilisation which we do not want. It might seem as if the human race in its progress had engendered problems which were insoluble and would finally ruin it.

This is only another variant of the fear that there is something hostile, or at least indifferent, in the very composition of the world, so that the human race finds itself in a cul-de-sac or threatened by the horns of an unescapable dilemma. We have to oppose to this fear the same faith in God as Creator and Sustainer of the world. " If any lack

[1] *The Great Society*, by Graham Wallas. See especially chapter i.

wisdom, let him ask of God," wrote St. James,[1] and what God is willing to give to individuals He will not refuse to the human race collectively. It is clear from the teaching of Jesus that God wants the human race to realise its unity, to become one family; the wisdom and the charity needed for that to be accomplished will not be withheld. It is true that we have created for ourselves enormous difficulties; the world has been unified politically and economically far more rapidly than morally or spiritually. But that is a reflection of our thinking; reverse the emphasis; in other words, repent, give greater attention to the questions of human relationships, and we shall find our problems soluble.

The Christian hope for society is based upon belief in God. Jesus Christ seems to have been open-eyed: He understood that men need food and clothing and many other material things; He realised the sin and folly of which they were capable; He was not blind to the pain and perplexity of human life, to natural catastrophe and to man's inhumanity to man. The obstacles to the realisation of God's good purposes for man seemed to Him like mountains in the way. Yet He clung to His belief in the goodness of God and the power of God, and He carried that belief like a banner through the deepening shadows to the

[1] James i. 5; cf. Luke xi. 13.

grave—and through it. It was the belief of a long and noble line of predecessors, prophets and apocalyptists and the unknown devout. It has been the faith since His time of saints and martyrs in every age. One and all have believed—and He was the supreme believer—that this is a planned world, that God planned it in wisdom and in love, and that we are called to ally ourselves with God's plans.

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN UTOPIA: WHAT GOD WANTS HUMAN LIFE TO BE

"*Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.*"

Our Lord, we may reasonably assume, would not have taught His disciples to pray a prayer unless He thought that it could be answered. Suppose it were answered? If God's will were done on earth, what would human life be like?

If we try to answer that question we begin to construct a Christian Utopia. Of course the vision is dim; human life would be so different that we cannot really imagine it. Yet the attempt is not hopeless, indeed it is necessary. We ought to know the broad lines of the society we hope for, pray for, and work for, And we shall, I think, find that the broad lines are fairly clearly indicated in the Bible.

Mark that we are trying to understand what life on earth could be, with all the limitations of earth; we are not trying to picture heaven or the heavenly life.

To understand what God wants for men and

women, and what is therefore possible for men and women, we need to read and re-read the story of God's dealings with men, and especially we need to soak ourselves in the thought of Jesus as recorded and illustrated in the gospels. By frequent reading, by prayer and by meditation, by interchange of thought with fellow-Christians, and by an honest attempt to live in accordance with what we have already learned, we come more and more to see the world and mankind as Jesus saw them, to see their possibilities as Jesus saw them, which is as God sees them.

I (*a*)

We have the assurance of our Lord that God wants our material needs to be supplied. He knows we require food and clothing, and just as earthly fathers make provision for their children, so God makes provision for us.[1] If men go hungry, homeless, without sufficient clothing, God suffers with them and He will bring to account those who might have helped and have not done so.[2] To be hungry and homeless may be a necessary part of the Christian life, a part of the war against sin; and those who endure hunger and homelessness may be more blessed than the well-fed and the comfortable; but that is because it is better to fight against sin than to acquiesce in it, not because hunger and

[1] Matt. vii. 9–11. [2] *Ibid.*, xxv. 31–46.

homelessness are other than evils in themselves. Our Lord does not decry the material blessings of life, the good gifts of God: it is concentration of desire on them, and desire of them for ourselves and not for others also, which is bad and which is likely also to defeat its own end. The assurance of our Lord is that if God's purpose were carried out there would be a supply for all of needful material things.[1]

(*b*)

Notice the high value which Jesus set upon health, how clearly He regarded sickness as being contrary to the will of God. "This woman whom Satan hath bound,"[2] He said of a woman with dropsy. A large part of His time was spent in acts of healing; and He used to refer to these cures as proofs that God was at work among men.[3] It was part of His commission to His disciples that they should heal diseases.[4] If we share the mind of Christ we shall do all we can to promote health, our own health and that of others. To acquiesce in ill-health is to acquiesce in the thwarting of God's will. It is our duty in the first place to believe in the possibility of a healthy human

[1] Matt. vi. 33. This paragraph should be read in conjunction with what is said on pp. 26–30, especially with regard to the Malthusian theory.

[2] Luke xiii. 16; cf. Luke xi. 14–20.

[3] *E. g.* Matt. xi. 4–6. [4] *Ibid.*, x. 1.

race. Far too many, doctors as well as laymen, take it as a matter of course that a good deal of illness will occur which must then be cured or relieved if possible. But the ideal should be health rather than cure of disease. It is significant that disease is rare among animals in the natural state;[1] granted that man's mental and spiritual development puts upon his body a strain which the animals do not know, yet even so should not disease be exceptional among men, as unfortunately it is not? God meant men to be healthy. Certainly Jesus was Himself healthy. Merely from a physical standpoint, He must have been a man to admire; no one could have lived the strenuous life He did, healing, teaching, speaking sometimes to as many as five thousand in the open air, tramping from place to place, living in tremendous publicity, enduring the stress of opposition, unless He had a strong and serviceable body.

(*c*)

God created the world beautiful. "The beauty of Nature is intrinsic, universal, penetrating. . . . It is as perfect in the little as in the great, in the snowflake and the structure of the minute organism as in the Alpine peak or the sunset sky. It is found in the most irregular heaping together of fragments, a mountain slope or a torrent, as in the

[1] See *The Bible of Nature*, by J. A. Thomson, p. 216.

perfect symmetry of the blue dome of the sky. . . . In Nature it is hard to find anything which is truly ugly. For the ugly, one has to turn to the works of man." [1] And wherever He is not hindered by man, God still crams the world with beauty; whenever man is willing to stand aside God blots out the ugliness which has been made. It is noteworthy how soon a piece of vacant ground is covered with plants; the Aldwych site in the heart of London was a notable example. If the most hideous of our industrial towns were abandoned for a generation, it would be transformed into a place of beauty. Is it not a sign that something has gone wrong when there is so much ugliness associated with the life and work of man?

It would be futile to pretend that this point of view is explicit in the Bible generally or in the recorded sayings of our Lord. It was to another race than the Jews that the great revelation of the holiness of beauty was given; and when ugliness jars on us and gives us a sense of something wrong, we are indebted for that sensibility to the Greek tradition far more than to anything else. Righteousness and not beauty was the great preoccupation of the Jew. Not that the Jews were insensible to beauty or denied its worth. The writers of the eighth and the nineteenth and the

[1] *God and the Struggle for Existence*, by C. F. D'Arcy and others, p. 24.

twenty-third psalms, to mention no others, were surely alive to the beauty of Nature as well as to the power and plenty revealed in it. The writer of the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah wished to see Jerusalem made lovely: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary." [1] The appropriateness of beautiful things in the worship of God was fully recognised, and, moreover, the craftsman's power to make beautiful things was held to be sometimes at least a gift from God: "I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship." [2] If Jesus was indifferent to and perhaps contemptuous of Herod's temple, we may remember that it was probably in extremely bad taste, a building of no real artistic merit. That our Lord had an eye for beauty is, of course, evidenced by His famous praise of the lilies of the field. One does not wish to place too great a load upon a single utterance, but the words taken in their context do seem to assure us that if human life were lived in accordance

[1] Isaiah lx. 13. [2] Exodus xxxi. 2–5.

with the will of God, beauty would not be lacking to it. Something like the loveliness of the wild flowers would be among the "things added." We are justified in thinking that beauty should be a normal accompaniment of human life and human activity, that ugliness anywhere is a defeat of God's purpose, and that the indifference to the ugliness which marks our city life, and especially our industrial life, is a sign of alienation from God.

(*d*)

Notice next that our Lord valued gifts of intellect and of natural endowment; they were good and could be turned to good account for God's service. The splendour of His moral qualities, the uniqueness of His relationship to God, have obscured for many of us the fact that if we regarded Jesus Christ merely as a man, He would unmistakably be a man of outstanding intellectual power. He had a close knowledge both of the letter and of the spirit of those writings which formed the main book education of one born in His day and circumstances, and He handled them with masterly ease. When controversy was forced upon him, He showed Himself superior to the best trained minds of His nation. Mark xii. is a striking record of Jesus' use of intellect and of His rebuke of shallow thinking.

By natural endowment He was rich; and by all

that education which comes, not through books but direct from life, He had profited to the full. He was an observant man, one who saw and understood a hundred little incidents in home and market-place, one who knew the ways of farmers and of shepherds and of merchants, one who had heard of kings and their doings and had formed his own opinions about them, one who looked at men shrewdly and penetrated the secrets of their thoughts. He had a great capacity for enjoyment: He noticed the beauty of flowers and the freshness and innocence of little children. He admired cleverness, eagerness, alertness, persistence in men and women; they were good qualities, though they might be turned to bad uses. The fact that Jesus thought them good assures us that God sets value on them.

To produce men and women like that is the ideal of education. Each child has its own endowment, different from that of every other child; whatever its endowment may be, we want it developed to the full. We want to pass on as much as possible of the rich heritage of our race, to enable him or her to move freely in our vastly extended realm of books, to learn through the senses, to be quick and accurate in perception and judgment, to drink deep of the joy of life. We want each child, by appropriate exercise of each faculty at the right time, to grow to the wisdom and vigour of manhood or woman-

hood planned for it by God. And when our education becomes wiser, as we trust it is in process of becoming, wiser in what it does not attempt as well as in what it does attempt, it should be the majority and not the minority of men of whom we can say with the poet: "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in apprehension how like a god!"

(*e*)

It is difficult to draw the line between what comes by natural endowment and what comes by moral achievement; they fade into each other. A man may be prudent, methodical, observant by nature or by deliberate effort; he may be naturally courageous or he may be courageous by a victory of will. They are good things to be, however we come to be them; and it is our duty to improve our natural endowment all we can. The way in which Jesus talked certainly suggests that He thought that mind and body were much more in the power of the soul than is commonly supposed. A man with a loving heart will be observant and a man with a pure heart will understand.

Whilst there is no warrant in the teaching or practice of our Lord for that queer heresy, which still lingers, that what happens to men's bodies[1]

[1] Or to their intellects or to their æsthetic natures; the same arguments apply.

matters little so long as their souls are all right, yet He always taught that what happened to the soul was of immeasurably greater importance than what happened to the body, because the soul is the higher and more lasting part of our nature. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear! Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him."[1] Sometimes the body must be sacrificed for the sake of the soul. To Jesus, hunger, disablement and premature death were grievous, yet there were times (not infrequent) when they should be endured bravely and even gladly as means to an end, as the price of a great good. But the good of the soul is ultimate; nothing can be measured against it.

What kind of character does God want us to have? The answer is not to be drawn from any particular passage in the New Testament; there is no schematisation of the virtues such as we find in Aristotle's *Ethics;* even the Sermon on the Mount is to some extent casual and incomplete.[2] It is the whole personality of Jesus Christ to which we must look for guidance. Even then it is not

[1] Luke xii. 4, 5.

[2] There are lists of virtues in the following passages; Matt. v. 1–11; 1 Cor. xiii. 4–8; Gal. v. 22–26; Phil. iv. 8; Col. iii. 12–14; 2 Peter i. 5–7; but they differ, overlap, and are not comprehensive.

by any formal imitation of Him that we shall accomplish our destinies; God does not create two human beings alike and He does not want us to be copies of any men or women, even of Jesus Christ. What He wants us to do is to express our own being as He gave it us. It is rather from the main set of the soul in Jesus, His broad attitude to life, that we learn.

He was conspicuously a big-souled man and He wanted all men to be big-souled, to discern the things of importance from trifles, to see through appearances into realities, to leap artificial barriers, to judge men by their real worth and not by the labels of race, class or creed. He saw a man of faith where others saw a Roman; He recognised a needy soul where others saw a Samaritan woman; He saw a child of God where others saw an unpatriotic extortioner. A rich man was to Him one in peril, not one to be envied. He condemned the Pharisees because they were little-minded men; they thought of God as if He were a fussy little man like themselves, one who would be very angry if His petty rules were broken and if men omitted to give Him a few herbs. Our Lord told His disciples that God was not like that; He rejoiced in the magnanimity of God; and He called upon men to be magnanimous too.

He lifted the virtue of truthfulness into a passion for sincerity, and He did this by making men realise

that all words are spoken and all lives are lived in the presence of God. If that becomes a reality to us we are bound to be Yes and No men, to hate not only a lie but the spirit of a lie.

His courage was magnificent; and it is significant that the early Christians were conspicuous by their courage.[1] Courage has always been one of the authentic notes of the working of God's Spirit in men. It is a comfort to many of us to know that the courage of Jesus was not just that indifference to danger which a considerable number of men seem to have. We are grateful for what the agony in Gethsemane reveals; the courage of Jesus was the highest form of courage, that of the man who knows fear but overcomes his fear. It is a courage compounded of two strains, an ultimate faith in God's wisdom and power and an absolute surrender to God's will. And from these two spring the kindred virtues of patience and endurance.

Most startling to His generation, and still hard to grasp, is His commendation of humility. It contradicts what seems almost to be an instinct in us, to assert ourselves at the expense of others. I do not believe that it is a virtue which can be explained or justified apart from the incarnation and death of Christ. Self-abasement and self-torture have accompanied many religions as a result of fear of a cruel and powerful God; but they

[1] Acts iv. 13.

have not implied real humility of the worshipper, nor has it been imagined that humility was a quality of the god. We should not have guessed that humility was an eternal characteristic of God Himself if it had not been for the Cross. And even now we have to gaze often upon the Cross if we are not to let slip our apprehension of it.

Central to the Christian religion is the revelation through Jesus Christ that God is Love, and that love is the last word in perfection, human or divine. We know in what an amazing way He exemplified it in His life and death; we need not dwell at length upon His strong affection, His tenderness, His never-failing interest in others and consideration for them. Perhaps we ought to remember His capacity for sternness when strong love could only express itself so.

Above all with Jesus virtue is to be active. It is not the avoidance of sin but the doing of good to which our attention is to be chiefly directed. Men are damned for what they omit to do at least as much as for what they do amiss. It is a loving temper that is wanted, and love is active, enterprising, ready to encounter hazards. It has been said, but perhaps unjustly, of a distinguished ecclesiastic of our day that " he keeps his wicket up but he does not score runs any more." We get the impression from Jesus that God prefers us to live boldly and to make blunders rather than to

achieve a negative virtue which is at once harmless and useless.

The ideal which the Bible puts before us is not an ideal for individuals only, but for communities; indeed the ideal of a holy community is one of the main themes running through it, and it is a concept becoming richer in content and wider in extent with the progress of revelation. The Old Testament is largely the story of a nation which felt a special call to holiness. "Ye shall be unto Me a holy nation," [1] says the Book of Exodus, and then follow the ten commandments and other directions for conduct. The Book of Deuteronomy is full of exhortations to a humane spirit and to humanitarian legislation; there is much about the right treatment of widows, of orphans, of foreigners, much too about just weights and measures, mixed up with many curious taboos which need not concern us: "*that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God.*" [2] To sustain and to purify this idea of a holy nation was the great work of the prophets. Christ's conception of the Kingdom of Heaven is, as we shall see, a conception of a community: the Beatitudes describe the temper and conduct appropriate to members of it. And the epistles of St. Paul, written to little groups of men trying to live in the spirit of Christ's teaching, are rich also in indications of such a temper.

[1] Exodus xix. 6. [2] Deut. xxvi. 19.

"*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

"*With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;*

"*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" [1]

It is an aspiration for a community of fallible men, not of perfect beings; longsuffering and forbearance imply that there is provocation; unity and peace are evidently regarded as high and precarious achievements.

"*Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*" [2]

There are still moments of irritation, spurts of temper; but there is not sulkiness, persistent malice, or long-continued hate.

"*Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*" [3]

It is still human life which is envisaged with offences and forgiveness, not a remote perfection.

The Christian virtues need to be practised collectively as well as individually by the members of a community. The individualism which has been rampant in religion for so long makes it difficult

[1] Eph. iv. 1–3. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 26. [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 32.

for us to realise what this means. Let us illustrate concretely by any religious organisation. The Student Christian Movement, let us say, will inculcate the duty of humility on its members; they will be urged as part of their Christianity to be modest, not thinking too highly of themselves, not comparing themselves with other people to the other people's disparagement. So far good. But it is not enough. The Student Christian Movement itself, as it expresses itself through its responsible officers, in its publications, and in the utterances of its rank and file generally, ought to be modest, not thinking too highly of itself, not disparaging other organisations. I venture to think that the virtue of collective humility is far more difficult to achieve, and far more rarely found, than individual humility. Yet it will not be a world in accordance with the mind of God until communities and societies of every kind exhibit this and the other Christian virtues in their corporate lives.

We get glimpses of holy communities at various times and in different places down the centuries. Sometimes it is an early Christian Church of which men say with wonder, " How these Christians love one another." At another time it is the transient glory of early Franciscanism. Sometimes it is a settlement of Quakers or of Moravians, living according to that wisdom which is first pure and then peaceable. Always the achievements have

been partial, local and impermanent. They are precious to us as firstfruits, indications of the temper which we hope some day to see achieved and maintained in human communities both small and great.

We are thinking about possibilities for earth, be it remembered, and the ultimate community we envisage is a community of men and not of angels. It is composed, not of perfect beings, but of beings who are still growing, still learning, and doubtless still blundering. "Every child is born a kicking little egoist," as Walter Rauschenbusch reminds us, and as long as earth is earth, each generation will have to learn afresh the lesson of mutual respect and of co-operation. This world, in short, must always be a school for immature souls. But it might be the kind of school God wants, the kind of school He planned it to be, a happy school and a sensible school, instead of the place of follies and cruelties which it is.

Doubtless it would still have its pioneers and its laggards, pushing it forward or dragging it back. Its main character would be, as the main character of a community always is, determined largely by the moral tone of its institutions and its traditions, its *ethos*. The community, like the individual, must be judged not by isolated acts or traits, but by the main trend and set of its character, whether it is facing the light or not.

(*f*)

Christianity is not in essence an ethic, though it contains an ethic: it is a life lived in right relationship to God. It means awareness of God; a sense of oneness with His purposes, and of sin forgiven; a sense of being taught and strengthened by God. So different is human life with such a consciousness from human life without it, that Jesus described the change from the one to the other as a second birth, and St. Paul wrote of it as a death and a resurrection. To attain this new kind of life is the crown of human living, the one thing which to have found makes human life a success though all else be missed, the one thing which to have missed makes human life a failure though all else be gained. It is a consciousness which puts everything into its right perspective and from which there naturally issues right conduct, so that if this consciousness were the general consciousness of mankind they would obtain with it all the lesser goods of life also.

The evangelisation of the world is the will of God, and He has laid the responsibility of it upon the Christian Church. We look forward to the ultimate triumph of foreign missions; and we look forward no less to the conversion of the heathen at home, in some ways a more difficult task. That man all over the world should know God and should serve

Him gladly, that is the very kernel of our Christian hope.

II

It has been convenient to call this attempt to outline what human life would be like if God's will were done a Christian Utopia; but I am aware that to use the word " Utopia " has its danger, it suggests a mere projection of wishes without regard to possibilities. Such an interpretation of the word is a result quite as much of human cynicism, of that lack of real belief in God of which we spoke in the last chapter, as of the wildness of the imaginings of idealists. As a matter of fact, if we turn to Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, from which the whole class of Utopias take their name, it is remarkable how much of it has actually come true or is clearly within measurable distance of coming true. I would suggest the application of two tests to the vision outlined in this chapter. First of all, is it a mere projection of personal hopes, or is it an elaboration of the actual promises of the Christian religion? Secondly, is there any solid reason for thinking that it is unattainable?

Is there anything impossible in the vision of a world in which the material needs of men should be supplied without the anxious and often unsuccessful struggle with which we are familiar? I think the verdict of science would be that there is not.

Is there anything impossible in the vision of a world in which men should be normally healthy as they are not healthy to-day, a world in which disease should be a very rare thing? I think our medical men would tell us that we could have such a world if we liked to pay the price for it, a price not only in money but in willingness to change our habits and to re-order our whole way of life.

Could we eliminate ugliness? I think that our engineers and our industrial chemists, our town-planners and our artists, with the active goodwill and co-operation of all of us, could do it. The main reason why we have spread hideousness has been that our hearts have been set too much on gain. I venture to think that if we cared sufficiently we could develop a coalfield or manufacture our chemicals without devastating a whole neighbourhood.

Is there any reason why our education should not make observant, appreciative and discriminating men? I know of none.

Could the average man be magnanimous, sincere, brave, patient, humble and loving? This is really the crucial question. I am not aware of any good reason for returning to it a dogmatic negative.

Our Christian Utopia is not a static one: it is quite consistent with changes in the structure of society, with progress both in the individual and in the community. The will of God for a child is not

the same as the will of God for an adult, and I imagine that in the same way the will of God for the Stone Age differed from the will of God for to-day; the trouble is that both in the Stone Age and in our own times men are disobedient to the truth they know. "The times of our ignorance God winked at," says St. Paul. Doubtless there are still heights of conduct which we do not essay simply because they have not yet swum into our ken. It is our refusal to climb those heights of which we know which constitutes our sin. It does not worry me that my son cannot walk or talk; he is only ten months old; it is quite in accordance with God's purpose for him. But if in some years' time he still could not walk or talk, it would worry me very much and I should think that God's purpose for him had in some way been thwarted. Nor shall I take it to heart if at about the age of five he passes through a period of violent self-assertion when he makes the great discovery that "I am I"; but it would be a deep grief to me if he carried that attitude to the world into later boyhood and into manhood. That there should be frays between primitive tribes, or that they should abandon the sick and feeble, does not seem to me to be so sad or terrible; that great civilised nations in the twentieth century should devote such a large proportion of their wealth and thought to war and preparations for war, that they should make such

inadequate provision for their weak and unfortunate members, argues a spiritual blindness which is the mark not of immaturity but of disease. Immaturity, for individuals and for communities, is a necessary stage and part of the plan of God; sin is a defiance of the will of God. The former must remain in our Utopia and does not disturb it; it is the elimination of the latter which makes it our Utopia, a conception of human life as by God's grace it might be.

That life would be very good, we may be sure. Life tastes good to most of us even in this sadly spoiled world which we know. It might be immeasurably better. But we do not look forward to the elimination of all pain, of all sorrow, of all struggle, or even of all discord. These may disappear in the final consummation in heaven: we cannot imagine, nor indeed do we wish, their total disappearance from human life on earth. There will still be aspiration and difficult achievement, birth pangs of new character and of new social orders; there will still be sorrow, if only because there will still be death; there will be sharp differences of opinion. What we eliminate is useless pain, struggle and sorrow without hope, malicious strife, and that frustration and failure of life which is the real tragedy.

III

When we try to formulate the supreme good for human life we find that we cannot express it better by using any other term than life itself, for that does indeed sum up and comprehend what we wish for and strive for.

> " 'Tis life of which our nerves are scant,
> More life and fuller that we want."

" Life is sweet, brother," says the gipsy in Borrow's *Lavengro*. " There's day and night, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon and stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise a wind on the heath." And we all of us want to taste life, though we have not all of us got the gipsy's happy faculty of enjoying the simple pleasures at hand. The fast young man about town wants " to see life," only he has a wrong notion as to how to set about it. " Life " was one of the key-words of the teaching of Jesus, it was the best gift of God about which He could speak, and it included all other good things. " I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Timothy, writes St. Paul, is to urge the rich members of his flock to lay hold on " the life which is life indeed "—real life, as we might say. But some texts of that same passage read " to lay hold on eternal life." " Life," " life abundant," " life which is life indeed,"

" eternal life "; they all express the same idea. And in view of very common misconceptions as to the nature of " eternal life," it will be well to examine briefly the history and meaning of the term.

" Life which is life indeed " is what we all look forward to, unless the springs of hope have dried up entirely within us, almost the worst catastrophe that can befall a man. Life, as we experience it, is so often unsatisfactory in one way or another; we are hampered by our circumstances, or we are not at peace within our own souls. The life we are living is not full life, not real life, not the life we could wish for ourselves and not (we think) the life which God would wish for us. And if we believe that God wants to give us the best possible life, we look forward to something different, to a better time.

This was much the case of the Jewish nation during long centuries of its troubled history. Israel did not flourish as the Jews believed that God wanted the nation to flourish. They were harassed by their enemies, distracted by idolatries and wickednesses within. Life was not the good thing they were sure God meant it to be. But the day would come when God would visit the nation, would turn its mourning to joy, would bring to an end the time of probation, and would bring in the new age. The New Age—it is always the word

of hope of the human race. In the New Age the Jewish nation was no longer to be threatened or humiliated by its neighbours, no longer to be in subjection or in captivity : on the contrary, it was to have, as it ought to have, the hegemony of the world. And in greater or less degree, according to their spirituality, men conceived of it as an age of righteousness. Israel would be a holy nation doing the will of God. Life would be worth living in the New Age.

" Eternal life " is almost literally " the life of the New Age." It is not to be confounded with life after death, though men came tardily to see that it included that. The problem of God's dealing with the individual was one with which Hebrew thought wrestled dubiously, without the firm conviction that it had about His dealings with the nation. It was a problem which became more acute as time went on, and especially during the fierce persecutions of the Seleucid rulers. The Jewish nation would come through its troubles into the glory of the New Age, men were sure of that. But those who had perished nobly, its martyrs, was there to be no reward for them? And there grew up a passionate conviction that God would raise them up to share with the nation, which they had loved so passionately and devotedly, its day of triumph. They too would enter into " eternal life." Thus life after death is incidental only to the con-

ception of " eternal life "; the essence of eternal life is quality and not duration. Notice that it is a thoroughly social conception, the glorious future of a community, and that it could only be obtained by those who identified themselves with the community. Jesus stressed this aspect of it, whilst widening the conception of the community; when He was asked about inheriting eternal life He told the story of the Good Samaritan. " We know that we have passed from death to life," says the Epistle of St. John, " because we love the brethren."

Jesus used the phrases, " to have eternal life," " to inherit eternal life," " to enter into life " interchangeably with " to enter into the Kingdom of God," to " inherit the Kingdom." [1]

We must now explore a little what He meant by the Kingdom of God.

[1] *E. g.* Matt. xix. 16; Mark x. 17; ix. 43–45; Luke xviii. 24; Matt. xxv. 34. See Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, pp. 370 *et seq.*

CHAPTER IV

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

I

JESUS seems to have used the expression "Kingdom of Heaven" or "Kingdom of God" in two ways. In one sense the Kingdom of Heaven is something to come when men are ready to accept the will of God; it has not come yet. If we walk through the streets of Hoxton or of Salford, we are sure that this is not what God intended when He created the world and called it good, and when He created man in His own image. Perhaps we feel even more strongly, when we see the luxury of some rich quarter of a city, that men refuse to have God as their King. Or we see the crowd of patients at a hospital, impaired and distressed by diseases of many kinds, and we are clear that this is not what God wants. The Kingdom of Heaven is in the future, it is the ideal society towards which we strive. But in another and an equally true sense, the Kingdom of Heaven can be here and now; it is in our midst. You may find men and women, handicapped heavily by their circumstances, who

are living in communion with God and who know what the peace of God means. They have the Kingdom of God as a present possession. I think of the courtesy and sympathy of poor widows whom I have known, and of the magnificent generosity which the needy often show to the needy. I think of the man who gave up to another man his bed in an East End doss-house and walked the streets through a bitter February night: he died of pneumonia a few days afterwards—a very gallant gentleman. Or I think of a Sanatorium, which I know, and of the brave cheerfulness of men and women who are struggling against one of the most formidable foes of man: it is indeed a House of Courage. There are splendours of the human soul which circumstances seem powerless to quench: indeed they shine out more brightly against the blackness of the background. That saintly men and women can be found among the dwellers in slums is no excuse for the cruelty and apathy which allow the slums to continue; but it is none the less something for which to be thankful to God. And so too one thanks God that one sometimes goes into a rich man's house and is conscious that it is a home sanctified by the presence of the Holy Spirit. We need not go far or wait long to find the Kingdom of Heaven: it is here and now and in our midst.

It is an imperfect presentation of the Gospel which ignores either of these two aspects of it. We

have suffered a good deal in the past from the false individualism and the false other-worldliness which have laid stress upon the saving of souls and upon personal character, but have never addressed themselves seriously to the building up of a Christian society. There have been missions to slum-dwellers by those who seemed to acquiesce in the continuance of slums, or who at all events were not conspicuously active in housing reform. Against this kind of religion, which has often caused Christianity to be stigmatised by labour leaders as " the opium of the masses," there has been much healthy revolt. It has been preached, and quite rightly, that Christ came, not to save an individual here and there out of a bad world, but to transform that world, to make a new society. It has been proclaimed, and it needed saying with great emphasis, that Christians ought to have a passionate interest in housing schemes, in factory conditions, in industrial disputes; that they ought to be scrutinising with jealous eyes every detail of our industrial system, challenging our social order itself to see whether it is Christian. For every part of life which does not yet belong to the Kingdom of God must be brought into that Kingdom.

The new preaching has inspired a great deal of enterprise, and many in Christ's name have worked earnestly and self-denyingly at schemes of social regeneration. There has been the admirable

pioneering work of the Settlements, the educational work of the social service unions of the various denominations, there have been efforts of Christian men like Mr. Malcolm Sparkes to do away with bitterness and friction in their own industry: in a hundred ways men and women who have heard the social gospel have been trying to make effective their aspiration, "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be done, as in heaven so on earth." It has been slow work and disheartening at times, yet who comparing to-day with thirty years ago can deny a considerable measure of achievement? Most certainly there is a new outlook in the Churches in regard to social conditions.

It was natural enough that those who had the new vision, those who had learned afresh the social message of Christianity, should think of the Kingdom of Heaven as the ideal society towards which we strive, and should speak and write about it as such. And as in all movements of human thought, there was a tendency to slur the opposite aspect and to say little about it as an immediate inward reality. Yet the souls of men are cheated if the Kingdom of Heaven is presented to them only as something in the future; for which they may work and sacrifice indeed, but which they cannot hope to see. It is a true gospel to the poor and oppressed that squalor and injustice are not in the Will of God, and that they will pass, that a happy brother-

hood of men is possible and is coming, that they themselves can do much to bring about the change; but it is not the whole gospel. For the most sanguine of reformers knows that evils will not be remedied in a few years. What a stupendous task, for instance, is the rehousing of London's millions, or even the rebuilding of a smaller city such as Sheffield. The social task cannot be accomplished in one generation or two, although wonders which we can scarcely conceive might be accomplished if the community sets its mind to it seriously. But it is to be feared that the great majority of those who live in the miserable surroundings of Shoreditch and Stepney and Wapping will die in those surroundings, a little better, we hope, but still bad. And there are times when valiant effort seems to accomplish nothing, when great hopes are disappointed. There were men who had given a lifetime to promoting the cause of international peace and to whom the outbreak of war in 1914 seemed the absolute destruction of all their achievement. And Christian men, alive to the signs of the times, have had to live before now in ages when society was slipping downhill into ruin.

Therefore it is the more necessary that the whole gospel should be preached, and that men should know that here and now they may become members of that real spiritual Kingdom for whose extension on earth we pray and work. We need not wait for

the triumph of the reformers. "We are a colony of heaven,"[1] said St. Paul to his converts at Philippi. One gets a picture of a band of Greeks settling in a barbarian land, keeping the tradition of their culture, and gradually expressing it and transforming their alien surroundings by doing so; just as centuries later men took the spirit of the English countryside into the wilderness of America, and strove to express it in homes in New England and Virginia and Kentucky. Just so we are to have the spirit of heaven and to strive to express it on earth. We are to have already the spirit of the coming society and we are to practise its virtues. Indeed in no other way can that society come into being. There is no more pathetic fallacy than to suppose that the transformation of society must or can precede the regeneration of its members. We are to be loving in an unloving world, truthful amid deceit, temperate in a greedy world, humble in a world that despises and penalises meekness, peaceable in the midst of brawling, spiritually-minded in an age of materialism. We are to know God and to enjoy Him in a world in which He is denied.

II

There is a good deal of confused thinking as to the relation between the life within and the life

[1] Phil. iii. 20, Moffatt's translation.

without, between spirit and body, between character and circumstances. That they interact is the sensible conclusion of most people, but different minds and different schools of thought give to the two sets of factors different weight and emphasis. At one extreme we find those who say that man is mainly or entirely the product of his heredity and his environment; we find the Marxians with their "economic interpretation of history";[1] and we find those who attempt to explain human life in terms of geography or of physiology. At the other extreme are those who hold that the human soul is or can be almost entirely independent of its surroundings. There are evangelical Christians, and those who correspond to them in other religions, who seem to think that outward circumstances are so unimportant that they may be ignored; there are exponents of the "Higher Thought" who go so far as to maintain that "a man's circumstances are merely the externalisation of his thinking."

Neither of these extreme views is the view of Jesus or the teaching of the Bible. Jesus certainly thought that a man's worldly circumstances had an important bearing upon his spiritual life. He did

[1] It is some of the Marxians, rather than Karl Marx himself, who push this doctrine to unwarrantable lengths. Karl Marx stated it with careful qualifications. His contemporary, Bakunin, stated it baldly: "Toute l'histoire intellectuelle et morale, politique et sociale de l'humanité est un reflet de son histoire économique."—*Dieu et l'Etat.*

not think that a rich man and a poor man stood an equal chance of entering the Kingdom; he thought that the former was heavily handicapped. On the other hand, he did not think that the rich man was certainly lost, that his economic circumstances determined his spiritual history; God could save even a rich man.

Perhaps it will be as well to elaborate a little. Let us begin with those who under-estimate the influence of the material upon the spiritual. It is a false other-worldliness which refuses to consider carefully bread-and-butter problems. The spiritually-minded realise the dignity of bread-and-butter; of it are built up temples in which the Holy Spirit is willing to dwell. The relation between stomach and temper is a commonplace, almost a ridiculous commonplace. Yet it can be tragic rather than ridiculous. The effects of malnutrition are clear enough to those who care to look. Energy, initiative, power to fight temptation are not usually conspicuous in a man or woman whose tissues are threadbare. There may be a game spirit in a starved body, but we wonder when we find it. Far more often, if we could only trace it, we should find that some weakness of character which we condemn had its origin in malnutrition, perhaps in early childhood. The temple of the Holy Spirit has been ill built, and the Holy Spirit is to that extent hindered.

As with food, so with housing; it matters for

spiritual growth how we are housed. It is said of Henry Drummond that he worked best when there was space about him. He was sensitive to external conditions, as almost all of us are. A pleasantly appointed room is a help to our spirits. Bad housing conditions can destroy souls as well as bodies; the connection between gross overcrowding and vice is notorious. An insufficient water supply fosters filthy habits which affect mind as well as body. A fresh coat of paint may give encouragement to the spiritual life. How a house can set its mark upon a soul can be watched in any of our slum districts. A bright girl marries; she means to make her husband happy; with high hopes she starts upon the making and the keeping of a home. But the house is such that the maximum of work gives the minimum of result. There are stairs where there ought not to be stairs, and there are no cupboards where there ought to be cupboards. The walls are damp and the landlord will not do repairs. The woodwork moulders and the wallpaper peels off. The smuts and the dust of the district make cleanliness an uphill task. She loses heart. Life is difficult enough in any case; the extra difficulties break her spirit. Ten years later the bright girl has become a tired slut. There are thousands of such cases; a house has helped to wear down the spirit of a woman. Many writers, notably Carlyle, have treated of the spiritual significance of clothing.

But not only food, houses, clothing have this significance; all the common objects of life have it. "A long table and a square table, or seats about the walls, seem things of form but are things of substance," wrote Francis Bacon, "for at a long table a few at the upper end, in effect, sway all the business, but in the other form there is more use of the counsellors' opinions that sit lower."[1] Democracy is a temper and an energy of the human spirit, but it can be helped or hindered by such material things as chairs and tables. Matthew Arnold was wrong when he said that "the helps to noble life are all within." We are helped from within and from without. A slow-running tap can make easier the road to demoralisation. The re-decoration of a house may help to save a battling soul.

And what is true of material things is true of immaterial things also. The human spirit is not independent of the customs, institutions and systems of its time. Men cannot be made good by Acts of Parliament, but they can be encouraged or discouraged in good or in evil by Acts of Parliament; the ways of virtue and of vice can be made more easy or more difficult, temptations can be increased

[1] Essay XX, *of Counsel*. A. Lawrence Lowell in his *Government of England* discusses the effect of the structure of the House of Commons upon the conduct of its business. We are told in S. Low's *The Governance of England* that Mr. Gladstone used to arrange carefully the places of the ministers at the Cabinet table.

or diminished. The customs of a trade or profession may make for honesty or for dishonesty. There is a well-known medical text-book on *Diseases of Occupation*, which treats of painter's colic, miner's nystagmus, wool-sorter's anthrax, housemaid's knee, and the like. A very useful parallel volume might be written on "Moral Diseases of Occupation." In a few cases the moral dangers incident to specific occupations are recognised already. There are the "thirsty trades," such as smithing and bricklaying. The snobbishness of upper servants is notorious and ought to be classed as a "moral disease of occupation." The law recognises in some slight degree the connection between occupation and morals; thus, for instance, the by-laws of many boroughs prohibit the employment of boys and girls as barbers' latherers, as billiard-markers, and in one or two other objectionable ways.

In *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* there are two striking passages in both of which obscenity is attributed as a kind of moral disease of occupation to those who are unfortunate enough to have to earn their living by very monotonous clerical work. Of one of his characters, tormented by loathsome and filthy images, the author says:

"The whole day I did nothing but write, and what I wrote called forth no single faculty of the mind.

Nobody who has not tried such an occupation can possibly forecast the strange habits, humours, fancies and diseases which after a time it breeds. I was shut up in a room half below the ground. In this room there were three other men besides myself, two of them between fifty and sixty, and one about three or four-and-twenty. All four of us kept books or copied letters from ten to seven, with an interval of three-quarters of an hour for dinner. In all three of these men there had been developed, partly I suppose by the circumstance of enforced idleness of brain, the most loathsome tendency to obscenity. . . . My disgust at my companions came to be mixed with pity. I found none of them cruel, and I received many little kindnesses from them. I discovered that their trade was largely answerable for the impurity of thought and speech which so shocked me. Its monotony compelled some countervailing stimulus, and as they had never been educated to care for anything in particular, they found the necessary relief in sensuality."

Whilst of another of his characters, also tormented by loathsome and filthy images, the author says: "It would have been his salvation if he could have been a carpenter or a bricklayer, in country air, but this could not be."

Certainly one finds in some offices a nastiness of

thought and a subtlety of indecent innuendo which is far worse than the coarse language of docker or navvy; the latter is disgusting enough in all conscience, but it is often used with little sense of its meaning and is more of an outward defilement, like the dirt on his hands and clothes; the poison in the other case is deeper in the soul.

Or, take another case in which the nature of a man's employment, or, to be more accurate, the way in which he is engaged, affects character; this is what Miss Maude E. Marshall, a well-known social worker, said to the Poor Law Commission about the casual docker and his life:

"The world of work to the typical casual man is governed by chance; for the good are not more successful in securing work than the evil. No class in the community could withstand the demoralising influence of such a view of life and such a system. It is not that the casual man has a larger dose of original sin than his fellows; it is that he is exactly what any other class in the community would become, the clergy, the bar, or the professions generally, were they submitted for any length of time to the same system of employment."

What Miss Marshall said could be confirmed by quotations from half a dozen competent observers of the effect of casual labour upon character. As

long ago as 1856 Henry Mayhew wrote in *London Labour and the London Poor :*

" The improvidence of the casual dock labourer is due, therefore, not to any particular malformation of his moral constitution, but to the precarious character of his calling. His vices are the vices of ordinary human nature. Ninety-nine men in every hundred similarly circumstanced would commit similar enormities."

It would be wrong, of course, to fall into fatalism, and to look upon occupation as an absolutely determining factor. Moral and social problems are more complex than that. There are varieties of temperament, home conditions, companionship and the use of leisure to consider. And there is the incalculable elasticity of the human spirit and its power of drawing upon spiritual resources. Not every docker is thriftless, many a drudging clerk is pure in thought and word; just as a man or woman works for years in an unhealthy occupation and yet escapes the disease for which it is notorious. Yet it remains true that just as there are trades which are dangerous to physical health, so there are occupations which are more than others morally damaging.

These are only obvious, glaring examples; we may be sure that there are other subtler, and often

unsuspected, relations between occupations and morals. It would be strange indeed if it were not so; the way in which a man or woman, boy or girl, spends a great part of waking life must of necessity be one of the great shaping forces in that life. A careful study of industry from this standpoint would be of great service to religion. Nor should it be a scrutiny of occupations in detail only. The capitalist system, like every other system which has been or will be, has its effects on the characters of those whom it associates: it is claimed by its apologists that it overcomes laziness, that it teaches self-confidence and enterprise, and that it has led men to co-operate on the large scale; it is asserted by its opponents that it stimulates greed and jealousy, and that it encourages the few to domineer whilst it deprives the many of opportunities of exercising initiative.[1]

So, too, creeds and philosophies, whether scientifically formulated or merely existent in prevalent modes of thought, exercise a tremendous influence upon human life and human character.

> "For modes of faith let graceless bigots fight,
> He can't be wrong whose life is in the right,"

is at best a half-truth. Men and women are often better or worse than the creed they profess or the social philosophy of their age and set, but they are

[1] See Chapter VII for an elaboration of this.

certainly influenced by them. Baron von Hügel concludes a discussion of the influences on the human spirit of external conditions by saying: "Finally, material things (however dead or seemingly dead) and abstract propositions (however empty if taken alone) can and do continually thwart or stimulate human spirits—within this life at least." [1]

Yet when the influence of circumstance (giving the word its widest meaning) has been assessed at its highest, it remains true that the triumph of the human spirit over circumstances, and not the reverse, is the outstanding feature of the history of our race. Man has mastered much in his environment, is mastering much more. Every time we generalise as to the tyranny of conditions over the human soul we find some outstanding challenge to our generalisation. We look at the little one-roomed home in which David Livingstone was reared; not too much help there. The daughter of a drunken cobbler, working in a Dundee jute mill at twelve years old—she is to be uncrowned queen of a huge tract of savage Africa. A stammerer became the greatest orator of antiquity. Who can explain Shakespeare by his parentage and upbringing? The greatest of the human race beat down circumstances under their feet, they create their own opportunities, they seek to turn their very disadvantages to good

[1] *Eternal Life*, by Friedrich von Hügel, p. 389.

account. That faith removes mountains finds ample verification in biography.

III

Confused thinking about the relationship of soul and body is responsible for a fallacy with which it will be well to deal here, because it weakens or injures a good deal of Christian work. It is that because the soul is more than the body, therefore the good of the body is only an indirect and relative good. One hears complaints, for instance, that a Church or a body of Christian men have done some piece of service—provided a men's club, let us say, or brought pressure to bear upon the local authorities to improve housing—but that those for whose benefit it was done are not brought nearer to the Church and do not give their loyalty to Christianity. Social service is a failure, runs the argument, because it does not save souls or strengthen the Churches. But if we were to allow for the sake of argument that it had been an utter failure in these respects, would it be thereby condemned? Not at all, a service rendered to a fellow-man is always a good thing done. It is demanded as an act of love from the doer; and to make a man healthier or happier is a good thing in itself. A healthy worldling is better than an unhealthy worldling on any sane reckoning; and good men and bad men alike need

food and clothes and houses to live in.[1] When Jesus healed the sick He did so because He pitied sick folk and wanted them to be healthy, and there is no evidence that a large proportion of them accepted His spiritual teaching. He fed the multitudes because they were hungry, not to attract them to His audience. Those Churches which run men's clubs or have other social activities, not because they see a need and wish to meet it, but because they wish to attract men to their services, deserve the failure they often get. Mouse-trap tactics are wrong. When loving men see a physical need they will try to supply that physical need, and when they see a spiritual need they will try to supply that spiritual need. Christ healed the sick and fed the hungry just as He taught, because here was a specific human need which He could meet.

IV

If we have grasped thoroughly the truth that the Kingdom of Heaven is present as well as future, we have got an important clue to right living. The present is not something entirely separate from the future, nor can present action be merely a means to some future end. Every action of ours is an end in itself as well as the means to a further end, because the state of mind which expresses itself

[1] Cf. Matt. v. 45.

in an action is not a bridge which we have done with when we have passed it, but a companion on our journey: it has its own present worth and it has also an enduring quality. A noble society needs a noble state of mind in its members, and that state of mind can only become habitual by constant practice of nobility. The coming of the society which shall be the outward embodiment of the love, sincerity and justice of its members will not be helped, but hindered, if it is attempted to establish it in any other spirit than that of love, sincerity and justice, or by any means incompatible with them. It is not enough to aim at a society which shall be in accordance with God's will; we must see to it that every step we take is also in accordance with God's will.

But actually men and women very often try to serve God's ends by means which He disallows. They seek to promote peace by resorting to strife; or to bring into existence a harmonious society by a preliminary exacerbation of class hatred; or to promote ultimate freedom by interim coercion. But the experience in every case is the same: the evil spirit which has been raised to help us will not be exorcised when we think that it has played its part and might well depart. The war spirit will not go when the war is over. The tyrants, who are to abdicate as soon as they have established liberty, find it necessary to stay on a little longer.

The statesman, who has pandered to popular prejudice to obtain office, finds that he is henceforth the slave of that prejudice and that he cannot use his office to do the good he intended.

We do wrong when we acquiesce in any other temper in ourselves than the temper of heaven itself; it is our duty to strive continually for that, however much in our human frailty we may fall short of it. But when it comes to action, we are all of us limited by our circumstances, and it is a matter of doing the best we can in those circumstances. What we are able to do may be a poor shadow of what we would like to do. In a great city, for instance, no one can give to every sufferer with whom he comes in contact the help which he would wish to give. We pass by, with averted eyes and shame in our hearts, men and women who need assistance and who perhaps appeal to us for assistance. Nothing else is possible. Yet we can have, and we should have, the spirit which acknowledges the claim and responds to it. It may seem meaningless and a mockery to speak of having a helpful spirit when we do not help. But that is not so. Though we may not be able to help a particular man now, yet the spirit which would gladly do so will find sooner or later some way of contribution to the solution of the problem which that man represents. If enough men cared sufficiently about their fellow-men they would find means

of re-ordering society so that either that kind of distress did not occur or, if it could not be prevented, it did receive adequate and appropriate help. We ought to be troubled in spirit until it is no longer necessary to pass by a distressed man without helping him.

As colonists of the Kingdom of Heaven we can have and we should have the spirit of Heaven; and we must express it in the world just as fast and as far as we can.

CHAPTER V

PERSONALITY AND SOLIDARITY

God is our Father and all men are brothers. This is a commonplace of Christianity, but it is one of those great commonplaces of which we cannot remind ourselves too often, which needs to be apprehended not by the intellect only, but with our whole being, and whose meaning we can continue to explore during a lifetime.

I

In the first place it means that every human being is of value to God, indeed every creature He has made.[1] The Universal Father cares passionately for each member of His great family and He wants us to care too. But we men and women find it difficult to realise that behind every brow and every pair of eyes which we look at there is a vivid personal life like ours. And for lack of imagination we are careless about each other and about each other's interests. Thence arise cruelty and strife.

[1] Matt. x. 29.

Jesus was not often angry, and certainly He was not angry on many occasions when we should have been. The occasions of His anger are therefore all the more significant. In the third chapter of St. Mark's Gospel we find the record of one such occasion :

"*And He entered again into the synagogue ; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.*

"*And they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the sabbath day ; that they might accuse Him.*

"*And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.*

"*And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil ? to save life, or to kill ? But they held their peace.*

"*And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And He stretched it out : and his hand was restored whole as the other.*

"*And the Pharisees went forth and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.*"

The anger of our Lord was roused because the onlookers cared so little about the man. They were not moved by his suffering, by his helplessness; they were not anxious that he should be healed if

possible. Probably they scarcely thought about him at all: he was to them merely a convenient test of the orthodoxy or unorthodoxy of this new teacher. But to see a man and not to enter into his feelings is to treat him as if he were only a thing.

The incident of the woman taken in adultery[1] is in this respect not dissimilar. Again a human being was thought of as something less than a human being. The Jews who brought her to Jesus seem to have shown neither pity nor shame nor genuine indignation. Probably they were not greatly concerned whether she were stoned or whether she were not stoned. What they were concerned about was whether they could use her to catch out a hated opponent. She was merely a convenient means. And their hardness and their insincerity and their lack of decency filled Jesus with a deep shame, so that He hid His face.

Jesus lived in a world in which there were divisions between men far deeper than those of our own day. Jew hated Roman, and Roman was contemptuous of Jew; Jew considered all Gentiles inferior, and what the Gentiles thought of the Jews we can read in Tacitus and Juvenal; Jew hated Samaritan with that special hatred which men feel to those who are in some unwanted way like themselves, and

[1] John viii. 3–11. See the brilliant exegesis in Sir John Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, chapter ix.

Samaritan hated Jew with the hatred which comes from an unadmitted claim to equality and fellowship. The rich and the learned despised the poor and ignorant, and the poor and ignorant knew it and resented it, and yet could not shake off an uneasy sense of real inferiority. There were notable social disabilities of slaves and of women. The tax-gatherers for the alien conqueror and the women who were prostitutes were classed together in a common infamy. And, as always, the respectable liked to keep themselves to themselves.

Jesus was too live and too big a soul to be kept away from His fellow-men and women in any such way. It was not that He ignored differences; He did not. He did not pretend that one man was much the same as another man, that race and creed and conduct could be treated as of no account. He cared passionately for His own nation, but it did not make Him despise other nations. He maintained to the Samaritan woman that salvation was of the Jews, but in doing so He showed a courtesy which proselytism too often lacks. It was certainly not a lax view of sin which made Him fraternise with sinners. He knew that the differences between men were important, but he held that the most important thing about men was that they all belonged to the family of God. Not only did Jesus refuse to be bound by the prejudices of His time, but He went out of His way to show what

He thought about them. When He was pressed to define brotherliness He illustrated it by a story about a Samaritan. When He went to dine with Zacchæus, He flung away the popularity in which He had entered Jericho.

We need to cultivate Jesus' way of looking at men. Class and race and creed divisions are rife enough yet. For Jew and Roman we can read Indian and Englishman; the parallel, if not exact, is near enough to be instructive. For Jew and Gentile we might say Gentile and Jew and not be far out; Englishmen walking through Stepney murmur "sheenies" to one another, much as the disciples in all probability muttered something about "dogs" as they went through the parts of Tyre and Sidon. If you want to understand the feeling between Jews and Samaritans, go to Belfast. We still have our class distinctions, fainter than in the time of Jesus, but very real barriers between men. We are still ready enough to characterise men in a lump as Germans or capitalists or Papists. We need to see men one by one and as they are. God is no respecter of persons, and we are called to be like God.

To ignore personality, to treat a man or woman as a thing, is a great offence. Yet it is an offence which many of us commit frequently. It is quite easy to put this to the test; watch yourself during the next week or so to see whether you always recognise

human beings as human beings; the liftman, the tram conductor, the charwoman, the telephone girl, the shop assistant, do we sometimes forget their humanity and think of them merely as conveniences? It is more difficult not to do so when one is busy and when one lives in a huge community.

When I am going about London I frequently travel short distances by Tube. I go up to an automatic machine, put in a penny, and there comes out a ticket. But sometimes I find that I have not got a penny, but only two halfpennies. Then I go up to the ticket-window, put down the two halfpennies and say "Mansion House" or "Charing Cross" as the case may be. And out comes a ticket. It may seem to be the same thing. But it is not the same thing. In the first case I have merely used a machine. In the second case I have dealt, if only for a moment, with a fellow-human being, one who has hopes and fears, ambitions, disappointments and triumphs, and an eternal destiny like myself. It may seem to mean little in such a fleeting intercourse, yet even for that moment it is worth while remembering to whom I am speaking; and certainly it is worth while cultivating the habit of recognising our fellow-men and women as fellow-men and women.

Doctors and social workers know how easy it is to treat a man or woman just as a case. The

doctor may think so much about the irregular functioning of some organ, or the abnormal response to some treatment, that the interest of the head crowds out the interest of the heart. But the more common danger is to fail in imagination when we are busy and tired; we hear that there are several more to see us yet, and we think of so many jobs to be done rather than of so many men and women in trouble and needing our help and sympathy. (It is also true, of course, that patients or clients can be extraordinarily inconsiderate.) It is amazing how callous even a kind-hearted man or woman can be at times, unless he or she is watchful. It is helpful to remember the courtesy and unselfishness of Jesus, who, when He had crossed the lake expressly to be quiet, found a great crowd waiting for Him and received them graciously.[1]

It is, of course, one of the commonest and gravest charges against industry that the personalities of many of those engaged in it are insufficiently recognised. There is danger to health and risk of life and limb, which might be eliminated or at least minimised, if the welfare of men ranked higher than profits or dividends. There is a subordination of men to machinery, which has destroyed in our large-scale machine production most of the educational value and natural joy of work. Autocratic control prevents self-expression and the deepening

[1] Mark vi. 31–34.

of natural powers which comes with responsibility. And finally and inclusively, the motive which is avowedly dominant is the pursuit of personal monetary gain to which the welfare of the community is at best subordinate and incidental.[1]

Returning to the incident of the man with a withered hand whom Jesus healed on the sabbath day, we shall find that it illustrates in another way the superior value for Jesus of the claims of personality as against the claims of anything non-personal. Just as men are made slaves to machines which were originally intended to lighten their burdens, so they are made slaves to institutions which were originated for their benefit. The sabbath, whose purpose was to assure a periodical rest to men and to the domestic animals, had been perverted into a bondage and a positive nuisance. In the verses[2] immediately preceding the description of the healing in the synagogue there is the account of another tussle which the Pharisees had with Jesus on the subject of the sabbath. Jesus said plainly and boldly on that occasion that "the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath." The underlying principle is profound and it gives us the supreme test of all human institutions: do they serve men or not? It is exactly the application of this test which is the

[1] See the fuller discussion in Chapter VII.
[2] Mark ii. 23–28.

recurring note of a well-known volume of essays [1] in which some of our ablest sociologists and jurists, as well as theologians and Church historians, examine the rights and duties of property. The same principle can be widely applied: there is always a danger of an institution coming to be regarded as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. A notorious example is the undue exaltation of the State by some schools of political thinkers, as if the welfare of the State could be an end in itself other than the welfare of the members of the State.[2]

It follows from the conception of mankind as God's great family, of which every member is precious to Him and should be precious to the other members of it, that no social philosophy is valid which does not take into account the needs and possibilities of everyone. The social philosophy

[1] *Property: Its Rights and Duties*, ed. Bartlet (Macmillan).

[2] It is perhaps advisable to add that whilst the welfare of individuals is the ultimate test of institutions, the apparent immediate welfare of an individual may have to be subordinated to the maintenance of an institution. A good deal of rigidity is necessary, for instance, if there are to be recognised and stable rights of property, or impartial and dependable administration of law; and this rigidity may press hardly upon some individuals. But the ultimate reason for the rigidity is not the sanctity of property rights or the sanctity of law, but that the welfare of all men over a long period of time is best served by the establishment and maintenance of such institutions and such laws. The sanctity of institutions is always derivative; the sanctity of human personalities is ultimate.

of Plato and of Aristotle ignored the slave class upon whose labours Athenian society was in fact largely dependent. The founders of the American Commonwealth had much to say about the inalienable rights of man; and they permitted slavery. It was only slowly that it was seen in this country that the arguments in favour of democracy involved logically the enfranchisement of the working classes. And it is only within the last few years that the political rights of women have been allowed. Nor is it only in the political sphere that we refuse recognition, or give half recognition only, to some individuals and to some groups. Members of the middle and upper classes have only too often forgotten, in the planning of their home life, that the domestic servant had her own life to live just as much as they had; and that is the reason why domestic service is to-day so widely regarded as a distasteful *pis-aller* rather than as an honourable occupation.

In just the same way the powerful nations of the earth are apt to forget or to override the rights of the weaker nations. We have seen it time after time in Europe; and we see it far more clearly in the dealings of the white races with what we are pleased to call the backward races. They are sacrificed to the white man's need or greed for oil or rubber or gold. Usually their land has been stolen; often they are virtually enslaved; in some

cases whole races have disappeared from the earth. It has not seemed of great moment to the white man that by his advent and operations the social organisation of the coloured man has been disturbed and perhaps destroyed, and with it there have disappeared the only supports to morality which the coloured man knew. The white man does not care very much. But God cares. God cares that the Tasmanians have ceased to be. God knows and grieves that so many of the Kaffirs and Hottentots are worse and not better for the presence of the European; that they have lost their old community life with its old sanctions, and that they have become flotsam and jetsam in the whirlpool of a civilisation they do not understand.

II

To be a member of a family is to be in an unescapable relationship. It is of no use to say that you do not want to have so-and-so as your brother, if he is your brother; the relationship is there and nothing can undo it. So it is with all of us in the family of God. It is useless to say that we do not recognise Jews or Germans, or negroes, or capitalists, or this or that vulgar and objectionable person, as our brothers; they are our brothers and our denial will not alter the fact. Carlyle speaks in *Past and Present* of a poor widow who could not get anyone

to acknowledge her claim to help; she proved her sisterhood by dying of typhus and infecting seventeen other persons. "They actually were her brothers though denying it." The essential unity of the human race has received many striking illustrations in the last few years; there are few countries and few persons who have not been powerfully affected by the War. Living is dearer in Central Africa because of the war. There are European nations—Norway is a good example—which were first debauched by prosperity and then half ruined by a slump in trade, as a result of a war in which they were strictly neutral.

We are always trying to escape from our duties to those members of God's family whom we do not know very well or do not like very much. But the attempt is vain and it only brings greater trouble in the long run upon ourselves. America would like to live in peace on the other side of the Atlantic without bothering about the welter in Europe. It is very understandable. But it is an impossible ideal for her. Great Britain is indisposed to render financial aid to set on foot the economic life of Central Europe; her own million and a half unemployed are a witness to the folly of aloofness. Golders Green and Surbiton are indignant when they are asked to share the burdens of that London to which they belong economically, but not at present politically. But if they understood that the very

foundations of society are in danger when there is a huge population rendered bitter by need, then self-interest alone would make them realise their oneness with Shoreditch and with Lambeth. We cannot escape the responsibilities of brotherhood. It is the case from the negative side for the League of Nations, for foreign missions, for collectivist legislation,[1] for philanthropic effort.

Every denial of solidarity is a denial of love and a refusal to accept the teaching of Christ. It is strange and pitiable to think, in the light of the stark warning which Christ gave in the story of Dives and Lazarus, of the propinquity of gross luxury and of appalling squalor in communities professing themselves Christian. To spend money far in excess of one's needs, to allow misery to continue which we could relieve, is to qualify for hell. What our needs are and how much we ought to spend on ourselves, how much we ought to give, in what form help should be given, are matters needing careful thought, and as to which we must decide in the main for ourselves; but it is hard to see how a man, who really cares for his fellow-men and is sensitive to their suffering, can, unless in exceptional circumstances, live otherwise than sparingly in a world so needy as ours is.

And what is true of individuals is true of com-

[1] The Poor Law is an early example of admission of collective responsibility to members of the community.

munities also. The Judgment of the Nations was a familiar conception to the Jews, deep rooted in their literature and in their tradition; they hugged to themselves the hope of a day when God, their God, should assign to the nations their right places and their right reward. It was the natural hope of a proud people which had suffered much. At the end of the time of probation would come their vindication. The prophets are full of it; they rehearse the woes which will fall upon Egypt and Edom and Moab, and they comfort their own people with visions of triumph and of dominion. The Lord will smite all the peoples that have fought against Jerusalem,[1] says Zechariah, and he draws a ghastly picture of their fate. Tyre and Sidon have plundered gold and silver and have sold Jewish children into slavery, says Joel,[2] and therefore God will be implacable with them and mete them out the same kind of treatment. Contrariwise, the people of Israel are to be exalted, and such remnants of the nations as survive the great judgment are to live under their hegemony. Jerusalem is to be the centre of the worship of Jehovah, says Zechariah, and if the Egyptians or any other nation will not come to keep the feast of tabernacles there—famine and plague for them ![3]

There were differences of spiritual level, of course, among the prophets; there were some, like Amos,

[1] Zech. xiv. [2] Joel iii. [3] Zech. xiv. 16–18.

who saw that Israel's nearness to God meant a special accountability; there were those who like the second Isaiah had the noble belief that it was the high privilege of the Jewish nation to reveal God's goodness to all nations. But the attitude of the prophets shows clearly enough the existence of a general popular trend of thought, from the influence of which even they could not for the most part entirely free themselves, that in the Day of Judgment God would deal harshly with the nations who were the neighbours and rivals of His people Israel.

Christ's contemporaries brooded much over the coming day of the Lord, the day of vindication for Israel, the day of destruction of Israel's enemies and of the subordination to her of all other nations. "He will appear to punish the Gentiles" was the assurance of one of the apocalyptic books[1] of the time of Christ's childhood.

Christ Himself had a good deal to say about "that day," its glory and its terror and its surprises. His teaching is plainest and most explicit about it, in the great description of the Judgment of the Nations which we find in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. In language and imagery which prophets and apocalyptists had long made familiar, Christ describes the great assize. The nations stand before the Son of Man, to whom the

[1] *The Assumption of Moses.*

Father has given the kingdom. They are separated as sheep or as goats, for reward or for punishment. So far the drama is upon traditional lines.

But with what judgment are they judged? There is no distinction made of Jew or Gentile: there is no rehearsal of wrongs done to Israel; there is nothing said about worshipping at Jerusalem or according to Jewish ritual. The test is other, simple but searching. Christ takes His stand with every human being in need: if they have supplied human need, they have befriended Him; if they have denied human need, they have denied Him. And so the nations of the earth are judged.

The nations of the earth are more aware of one another to-day than ever before, the happenings of each are the common knowledge of all. If few of them are prosperous now, yet some are in comparative comfort whilst others are in sore straits. One nation in particular cried out in the misery of famine, and Christ suffered in the hunger of ten millions of His brothers. The cry of starving Russia reached our nation. We could not plead ignorance; and if we pleaded inability to help God would brush the lie aside. This nation refused to give a quarter of the price of a battleship to save men from starvation. By such refusals nations declare their own damnation.

In a normal family the relationships are not only accepted, but they are accepted gladly. We do

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not feel them as irksome bonds, but rather as among the good things of life. God wants it to be so between all the members of His family. As we advance in love there is less and less need for claims to be pressed upon us; we go out of our way to meet them. When the conscience of the community becomes more sensitive the Poor Law, which marked in its beginnings an advance in collective responsibility, comes to be regarded as hopelessly inadequate.

Collectively and individually we ought to become more and more sensitive to suffering and need. Every want unmet should be a burden on our hearts. In a huge and complex society, such as that we live in, there are many excuses for inaction in face of distress. It is not always easy to tell whether distress is real or counterfeit; it is hard to trace its causes; it is often very difficult indeed to know how to relieve it effectively. The sheer numbers oppress and paralyse; whatever we can do seems a mere drop in the ocean of misery. These are good reasons for getting an elementary social training, for calling in expert help, for collective action, and quite often for doing nothing for the time being: they are not good reasons for dismissing the need from our mind or washing our hands of it. Every beggar in the streets, every sufferer, is a challenge to us: we may be able to do nothing, but we ought to carry the burden of an unsolved problem on our

minds and consciences. If enough people cared enough, ways would be found for dealing effectively with a large volume of misery which at present goes unrelieved. And as a matter of history, a great deal of what has been accomplished has been the result of a few persons caring intensely.

Our Lord teaches that even wickedness is not to be allowed to destroy solidarity. To realise our oneness with and responsibility for the weak and suffering is comparatively easy, in theory at least: to retain a feeling of solidarity with those who have done us wrong, and who may still be doing us wrong, that is the height of virtue to which we are called. Our Lord indicated it with a touch of humour such as often accompanied His deep teachings:

"If you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you? Why, even sinful men love those who love them. If you help only those who help you, what merit is that to you? Why, even sinful men do that."

Anyone can be pleasant to pleasant people. But to be pleasant to unpleasant people? Well, that is where the fun begins.

Christians are not to be just ordinary, decent men and women: they are to be like God. And God confers His blessings on good and on bad alike. "He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." "He is kind even to the ungrateful and to the evil."

It does not mean that we are to treat all men exactly the same: it does mean that we are to wish for the good of all men. It does not exclude restraint if restraint be necessary for the protection of others; it does not exclude punishment, if punishment be indeed for a man's good: it does exclude vindictive punishment, and it excludes equally a mere exclusion of him from our interest and consideration. The sinner is to have a place in our love. We must not repudiate our solidarity with men because they behave badly; and if we do repudiate it, we only deceive ourselves, for the solidarity is a fact and it remains in spite of our unwillingness to acknowledge it. "This, thy son," says the Elder Brother of the prodigal; "this, thy brother," says the Father, correcting him.

Love your enemies, and so show your kinship to God, says Jesus Christ. And the Cross of Christ is the supreme witness to God's passionate identification of Himself with His sinful children, of His maintenance at unspeakable cost of the solidarity of His family.

III

Love makes possible a harmony of interests in a well-conditioned family. When a decision has to be made it is not felt as a contrast of rights or of strengths, that what is good for one member of the family is bad for another member of it, but rather

that what is done is done in the interests of all and with the goodwill of all. Sometimes it is very hard to find out what is best to do. Which of two sons shall be sent to college when there is not enough money for both to go? Or the father's convenience may demand that the family should live near his place of business, whilst the mother's health makes it desirable to live far away from it. These are comparatively easy cases: the dilemma is often much more acute and painful. Love cannot always take away pain from the decision, but it can take away acrimony. Often it does more; it makes a solution possible which without love would be impossible. And whenever a decision has been taken, each shares by sympathy in the advantages or disadvantages which it brings to others. The boy who goes to college bears a smart because of his brother who stays at home; and the boy who stays at home rejoices in his brother's opportunity and feels a pride in his success. The family sticks together, as we say; that is, each member of it feels that at bottom nothing can be good for one unless it is good for all, and that the hurt of one is the hurt of the whole family.

As it is in the family, imperfectly no doubt, but yet in very considerable realisation, so it ought to be in the larger family of mankind. Because we are children of the same Father, because we are members one of another, at bottom nothing can be

good for one or some unless it is good for all. This is so, whether it is realised or not, but it makes all the difference in the world that it should be realised and accepted. What is really good for the employer is really good for the employee; what is really good for the Japanese is really good for the Australians also. The solution of the problem of Ulster is the solution of the problem of Southern Ireland also. This does not mean as a rule the maintenance of the *status quo* or acquiescence in existing relationships, though it may do so. It does not necessarily mean compromise, though it may do so. It may mean the acceptance by one party of the other party's claims and the abandonment of a position hitherto held. The essential is that the solution arrived at shall be based on the consideration of the needs and views of all concerned, and not on the consideration of the needs and views of some only. And where men set themselves in faith to find such a solution tasks become possible which were impossible before. The good of each becomes part of the common good, and what is done is accepted by the common judgment as the best that could be done in the circumstances. The alternative is a naked clash of rights and trial of strength, at the end of which victor and loser alike have suffered more and gained less than they would have suffered and gained by an arrangement come to under a deep sense of unity.

Upon the greater or less realisation of individual worth and solidarity depend such ethical conceptions as equality, liberty, justice, rights and duties. Christianity has modified them profoundly and has enriched them. Equality means at bottom that each of us is of such worth that the differences between us are dwarfed into insignificance. Liberty means that each of us is to develop his unique personality as fully as possible. But the development by each of his own personality must be related to and conditioned by the development by others of their personalities. Justice means that each shall be recognised as one, and that his needs shall receive as full consideration as the needs of any other. Our rights are the share in the general well-being which others ought to allow us; our duties are the share in the general well-being which we ought to allow to others: all our rights can be summed up in one right, which is to be loved; and all our duties can be summed up in one duty, which is to love.

CHAPTER VI

A CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK ON SOCIETY

Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent.

METANOEITE, the Greek word which our Bibles translate Repent, means literally Think differently. There have come into our connotation of the term two ideas which it did not originally possess—suddenness of change and grief over the past. Each of them may be, and often is, an accompaniment of the change of thought, but they are not necessary to it nor of its essence. Our Lord did not say a great deal about mourning over past sin; nor did He lay stress on the rapidity of the change of heart and mind, though He emphasised the folly and danger of careless delay. We get nearer to His meaning if we render His injunction "Change your thinking." "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind,"[1] wrote St. Paul. It means the change in outlook which occurs when a man sees the world and himself and his fellows in the light of a new conception of God. He has to begin

[1] Ephes. iv. 23.

re-thinking his whole philosophy of life. It is not an intellectual process merely, it involves his feelings and his will also; it is a re-education of the whole man. And that is *Metanoia*.

I

Tolstoy, in one of those delightful stories which are as near to the parables of our Lord as anything in literature, tells of an angel who came to dwell on earth and who, as he moved about among men, saw things from the standpoint of heaven. He saw death in the face of a man who passed him by unhelped when he was cold and hungry; and the house of a selfish woman was foul with the stench of death. But when the man and woman were stirred to compassion, then the angel saw God in them. And if our spiritual insight were greater we should judge of life in some such manner.

In every big business the accountant draws up a balance sheet at the end of the year; he shows the receipts and the expenditure, the profit and the loss; and on it the directors issue their report. Here there has been a saving effected; there the results did not come up to expectation. Prospects are good in this direction, uncertain in another. And so the situation is reviewed.

But in the archives of the angels there is another

balance sheet—the spiritual balance sheet—and another report, an account of the year's working as it seems to God. A little speeding up here, and the men came away over-tired, just in the condition in which the temptation to dull the sensations of fatigue with alcohol is hardest to resist. So much spiritual loss. The wrong man was made foreman in that workshop—a smart man but a bully; a score of men were embittered. Tolstoy's angel would smell death. A club-room was built for the girls so that their dinner hour need not be spent in the streets. A great moral gain. A little extra trouble was taken to see that the boys learnt their trade. Who shall say what that means to a lad, to grow up smart and fit, self-respecting, a workman with a healthy pride in his craft, instead of muddling along, half-taught and a bungler? And so this other report would run, very different in its emphasis from ours, noticing many things to which we in our worldly wisdom pay little attention.

It is some such appraisement as this that we need to make, and indeed in greater or less degree are always making. If we are living as members of a colony of Heaven we shall not be wanting in enthusiasm for the extension of God's rule. We shall be quick to perceive what is being done contrary to the purpose of God and we shall be eager to get it changed. Our conception of the

Kingdom of Heaven gives us a standard of values which we can apply to the world in which we live. We have a vision, which is continually growing clearer, we trust, of the kind of human life God wants. It provides us with a test of all human activities, of laws, of customs, of institutions, of habits, of education, of politics, of industry, of religious life : we ask about each whether it is part of, and whether it tends to create and maintain, such a society of healthy, happy and holy men and women as God purposes.

It is not intended to attempt here a systematic or comprehensive survey from a Christian standpoint of present-day society; needless to say, that is a task far beyond the writer's powers and probably beyond the powers of anyone at present. What will be given here will be merely illustrations of the way in which such a survey might be made. But the writer does suggest very seriously that a systematic and comprehensive survey could be made and ought to be attempted, and that the lack of it accounts in considerable measure for the confused utterances and the lack of power of the Christian Church when it is faced with social issues, and for the discredit into which it has fallen in consequence.

II

Let us content ourselves with looking at some of the outstanding features of contemporary society and trying to see them against the background of our conception of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.[1] Suppose we start by thinking about the distribution of population. It is an age of huge cities and of depleted countryside. Does this tend to produce such men and women living in such association as God wants? It is difficult to answer in the affirmative. There are certainly some notable triumphs in city life: sanitation and freedom from epidemic, maintenance of order and sense of security, blossomings of intellectual and æsthetic life. None the less it seems to be true that great cities are destroyers: they drain physical vitality, they withhold that important part of education which comes from contact with Nature,[2] they dull the sense of God, they paralyse the sense of neighbourliness and of civic duty by their sheer scale. To dispraise country life is no answer to the indictment, for an unnaturally depleted countryside

[1] An important attempt at a comprehensive survey of society from the Christian standpoint is being made in connection with the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship to be held at Birmingham in April, 1924.

[2] See on this point R. A. Bray's *The Town Child.*

has the complementary defects to unnaturally swollen cities: stagnation corresponds to fever. What we need to do is to think out a better distribution of population and to work towards it. There are strong arguments for the creation of new cities of moderate size, planned from the first, and combining the best features of both urban and rural life. Such cities are not entirely dreams; they are among the dreams which are beginning to come true. Town-planning has made huge strides in the last twenty years.[1]

Let us look next at the inequalities of wealth which are so conspicuous a feature in our communities. Great riches are inimical to liberty and to fellowship. The millionaire is rightly regarded with misgiving, though personally he may be well meaning: "money talks," as the Americans say. The ownership by a small section of the community of most of the land and of most of the capital gives them an unhealthy control over the lives of the majority. And we many of us know from our personal experience that a friendship is subjected to a severe strain when one of the parties to it becomes much richer or much poorer than the other. It is not surprising that great inequalities

[1] See *New Town*, ed. Hughes (Dent, 2*s*.), and for more detailed information consult the Garden Cities and Town-Planning Association, 3 Gray's Inn Place, W.C.

in wealth have produced cleavages and fissures which threaten our whole social structure. Certainly freedom and fellowship are least impeded when the range of differences in incomes is a narrow one. There can be no doubt that the great Christian teachers, like their Jewish predecessors, have sustained a steady witness through the centuries to the belief that the ideal society would be one without glaring contrasts of riches and poverty.[1] Where these exist it is natural to suspect idleness or exploitation or both. A Christian society will be so ordered as to detect and to discourage them.

There is a strong case for limiting sharply the right of bequest and of inheritance, without which few accumulations of wealth could be so great and so lasting as to be socially mischievous.[2] There are two chief sources of great fortunes in our own country. The first is the private appropriation of the unearned increments of land values. The second is industrial profits. With regard to the first, a large number of economists are agreed that these unearned increments are eminently suitable for heavy taxation. As to profits, we need to see what these include : wages of management, reward

[1] See *The Christian Use of Money*, ed. Lofthouse (Epworth Press).

[2] See L. T. Hobhouse, *The Elements of Social Justice*, chapter ix.

for risk-taking, and also a larger or smaller amount which may be due to superior bargaining power or to some accidental advantage. A well-ordered society, supposing it to retain private enterprise, would endeavour to distinguish between the different kinds of profit and to reduce this last kind, which is of little or no social utility, to the smallest possible dimensions.

But even if inequalities come into being they should tend to disappear of themselves in a Christian society. Those who prosper will devote their surplus to the help of those who are in need. The well-to-do will reduce themselves to a mere competence in their efforts to raise the poor to a competence. Of course there is need to be careful how help is given. There is a kind of help which spells patronage on the one side and pauperisation on the other. And charity must never be a substitute for justice. But the right kind of help blesses giver and recipient alike. That there has been an enormous amount of such help given is a fact to which we Christians can point with satisfaction. But we cannot close our eyes to another fact, which is that there are also a great many professing Christians who seem to consider that an increased income is an immediate and complete justification for increased expenditure on personal pleasures. And what is true of Christians is, of course, far

more true if we consider society at large, and it shows how far we fall short by Christian standards.

Taxation, in so far as it is accepted by fairly general consent and is not forced by one section of the community upon another, is an expression of collective will. A community, therefore, shows its character by the taxes it raises and the way in which it spends them. It may be judged by the extent to which it uses its resources on behalf of its poorer and weaker members. A very considerable expenditure of this kind is accepted without much protest by the great majority of citizens, and it is an indication of the extent to which the community has been permeated by humanitarian ideals. The extent to which it has not been permeated by humanitarian ideals is equally indicated by the strenuous opposition which is usually made to any proposal to increase that expenditure. It is easily understandable, though not therefore justified, at the present time when we are staggering under the burdens created by the war; but it was much the same before the war. Every increase of expenditure intended to strengthen the position of the weaker members of the community and to diminish inequalities was fiercely contested. In so far as the opposition was due to a belief that the methods proposed would not actually achieve what was intended, it might be mistaken in judgment,

but it would not be necessarily an indication of an unfraternal temper. But there can be no doubt that a good deal of the opposition was due to lack of sense of solidarity, a failure to apprehend the incompatibility of gross inequalities with real liberty or with real fraternity.

III

For convenience of spacing, the somewhat lengthy examination of commerce and industry has been put into a separate chapter; otherwise in sequence of thought it would best follow here.

IV

If little space is given here to a consideration of education it is not from lack of realisation of its importance, but because the present writer lacks the knowledge to write adequately about it. A great deal has been written by men and women with an intimate knowledge of the subject, and in a noble spirit. To their books the reader is referred.[1] It must suffice here to indicate the kind of scrutiny

[1] *E.g.* M. L. V. Hughes, *Citizens to Be;* E. Holmes, *What Is and What Might Be;* T. P. Nunn, *Education: Its Data and First Principles;* J. C. Maxwell Garnett, *Education for World Citizenship.* For an account of recent experiments see *The New Era in Education*, ed. E. Young.

to which education ought to be subjected and to which it is actually being subjected, though not by a sufficient proportion of the community.

We may start from that point. A community of men and women which kept before itself the standards of the Kingdom of Heaven would certainly attach to education and to the teaching office a high importance. Our own community does not honour teachers highly, does not provide generously or wisely for their training, and does not supply them with the equipment for doing their work well. Not enough of them are employed : classes are too big, and education stops too early for most of our children. Money is spent grudgingly and parsimoniously : a comparison of our total expenditure on education with our total expenditure on the fighting forces, or with the drink bill of the nation, is conclusive on that point.

The motives for education require scrutiny. Is the aim of the teacher in teaching, the aim of the community in providing education, the motive of the parents in sending their children to school, to make such men and women as God wants, or is it something less? There is the sordidly utilitarian view of education which conceives its main purpose to be to prepare boys and girls to earn a living later on. It should indeed do that, but it should do much else. The aim of education should be to help

boys and girls to be the boys and girls God planned them to be, and to become the men and women God planned : healthy, alert, appreciative, well-informed, able and willing to co-operate with their fellow-men, sensitive to spiritual influences.

On the whole the conditions of our schools seem to make for physical health, though there is grave doubt in the minds of some who have given a good deal of attention to educational matters whether it is not doing an injury to children to compel them to sit indoors for so many hours in a day. And some of the older elementary schools, low-pitched, noisy, over-crowded, ought not to be tolerated longer.

There can be little doubt that too much importance is attached to mere information in most schools, that the natural curiosity of children is often smothered under a load of unrelated facts, and that history and literature and much else which ought to feed the imagination and minister to the sense of beauty are turned into a dull task. And the question needs continual asking whether our schools and colleges are indeed teaching people to think for themselves, or whether they do not tend to quench rather than to foster the small amount of originality which most of us have.

When we remember that the ideal at which we ought to aim is an ideal for a community, and that

the individual only develops rightly if he comes to realise himself as a free member of a community, several other questions and criticisms present themselves. Of the public elementary schools, and of the colleges in which their teachers are trained, we must usually say that they do not seem to be preparing those who pass through them for the self-discipline and the co-operation which we desire to see in the wider community outside. And indeed in the great majority of our public elementary schools neither individuality nor the community spirit are fostered to any great extent: they cannot be, as things are at present; mere size of class presents difficulties which only the exceptional teacher can surmount. More freedom and more community sense are found in the secondary schools and in the newer universities. There is a great sense of community in the so-called public schools and in the older universities. That in itself is all to the good. Unfortunately there are grave drawbacks. There is little recognition of corporate humility as a virtue; indeed the constant appeal is to corporate complacency. And the community towards which loyalty is fostered is too narrow in social range (this is more true of the schools than of the universities), so that together with the community sense there is usually induced also that spirit of class which is the essential sin of schism.

Education should help us to realise our membership of a nation which is itself a member of a community of nations. It should foster the right kind of pride in our country and a desire for her true welfare; it should give a conception of her mission and of her duty in the world. It should teach us to enter sympathetically into the hopes of other nations and to understand their peculiar character. And it should make us good members of that community which is wider than the nation and embraces all the nations—mankind. That our education has been and still is very inadequate to that task is only too patent: there are, however, many hopeful beginnings at the present time.

Lastly and supremely, education is to be approved or condemned by its success or failure in helping our children as they grow into manhood and womanhood to come to a knowledge of God and an acceptance of His rule and guidance. Religious education includes a lower knowledge of things which can be taught, such as Bible history and Christian doctrine; it includes also that higher knowledge, the apprehension of God Himself by ourselves, which cannot come by way of instruction, but to which we can be helped by the infection of personality. For religious teaching there is a divided responsibility between home and school and Sunday school, and there is danger of each of

the three shelving the responsibility on to the others. Their respective functions need thinking out more clearly. That religious education has not been particularly successful of late years is clear enough from such evidence as that contained in the Army and Religion Report.[1]

V

There are many other phases of human life—notably the use of leisure and the relationships between the sexes—which ought to come under consideration, if this were in any sense a comprehensive review and not the sketchiest illustration of a method. And last, but by no means least, in exactly the same way as we scrutinise existing conditions and practices, we ought to scrutinise all proposals and all efforts for reform. It must be asked in the first place whether the ideal towards which they are directed is consonant with the ideal of the Kingdom of God upon earth. It must not, for instance, ignore either spiritual needs or material needs, and it must recognise the subordination of the latter to the former. Some of the schemes of employers for the welfare of their workpeople have been severely criticised by Labour leaders and others on the ground that they have offered material

[1] *The Army and Religion :* an inquiry, and its bearing upon the religious life of the nation, 1919.

benefits at the expense of some further curtailment of liberty. The line of criticism is sound : freedom is of greater importance than comfort.

In the second place we need to make sure that the proposal does not aim at the well-being of some to the hurt of others. So far as our human limitations of knowledge and of sympathy allow us to do so, we ought to take into account the well-being of all. A proposal to benefit our nation without regard to the harm which may be done to other nations is an unchristian proposal. Nor can Christianity give its blessing to proposals conceived in the interests of one class only with no care as to their effect on other classes. This does not necessarily invalidate any proposal for taking away privileges or possessions from one class and giving them to another class; but it does mean that what is done should be in the true and ultimate interest of all, as, of course, any act of real justice would be.

A more subtle danger is that we may satisfy ourselves as to the ideal but not examine the temper and methods of those working for it.[1] We need

[1] It is to my mind a fair criticism and a weighty one which Mr. Hartley Withers passes (in a book which seems to me otherwise singularly unconvincing) on the most prominent advocates of National Guilds : " The temper in which they flout the work and efforts of the older socialists and others who are trying to improve the lot of the wage-earners by other methods makes one doubt whether they have it in them to put forward a great and sound reform. Such work is not often done in such a spirit."—*The Case for Capitalism*, p. 235.

to bear in mind the essential unity of means and ends. Christianity is a Way of life, and the way and the end of the way are alike the expression of love. The spirit in which a reform is conceived and attempted should be the spirit of love. It is in this respect that persons with apparently identical aims are often in reality far apart. There are those, for instance, who are trying to abolish class by making men love one another more so that they cannot bear the barriers any longer. And there are others who are trying to achieve the same result, but by working up class bitterness to a pitch when it shall issue in a violent revolution which shall end class. The class war to end class war—like the war to end war. The one will be as unsuccessful as the other.

VI

Two things more ought to be said before leaving the subject. The first is that repentance does not simply mean thinking differently or feeling differently: it means willing differently. It is a re-direction of the whole human personality.

The second point is that the kind of criticism which is most valuable is self-criticism. That we should form a judgment of others is inevitable and that we should form a right judgment is most desirable, but the Christian method is to be much more concerned about reforming oneself than

about reforming other people. The most effective criticism of business could come from business men, of trades unionism from trades unionists. The most convincing demonstration to the heathen world of their need for Christianity would be a more consistent Christendom.

CHAPTER VII

A CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK ON SOCIETY: COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

THE same kind of tests must be applied to commerce and to industry as we have been applying in the last chapter to other departments of human life. Their only legitimate purpose is the promotion of human welfare, and that includes the welfare of producer and of consumer alike: the one should not be sacrificed to the other, nor the welfare of any part of the community to either or to both. We have reason to expect that a harmony of interests can be found, since industry is essential for the supply of human need and must therefore be part of God's good plan for men. If, therefore, we find that some manifest harm is being done by industry, we shall inquire whether this cannot be remedied and we shall expect to find that there is a remedy. Human industry ought to be a blessing to all concerned.

I

The first question to ask about commerce and industry is whether they do as a matter of fact

perform their function: that is to say, do they supply the material needs of men and women? And at once we are faced by the startling fact that a large part of our population is insufficiently fed, clothed, and housed;[1] whilst if one goes beyond mere necessities, the deficiency of things desirable for a good life is still more marked. Nor can we attribute this entirely to the mal-distribution which we have already discussed: the total product of industry is such that even if there were fairly equal distribution the income for each family would be far from satisfactory.[2] There was doubtless an increase in real wages during the last century, but it seems difficult to believe that the increase in production kept pace with the increase in productive capacity. And when we consider our command of natural forces, our mechanical in-

[1] See Rowntree's *Poverty* and Bowley's *Livelihood and Poverty*, and a discussion of their figures in my *The Facts of Poverty*. We are pretty safe in saying that before the war something like forty per cent. of the population lived in damaging poverty. It is simpler to take pre-war figures because we have no adequate post-war survey, and also because it might be argued that the war, and not the defects of commerce and industry, was the cause of post-war poverty. There is no reason to suppose that there has been any startling change; bad cases of under-feeding are probably fewer, housing is certainly a good deal worse.

[2] Professor Bowley, in *The Division of the Product of Industry*, estimates the average family income in pre-war days at about £3 per week.

genuity, and our organising ability, this smallness of result suggests some grave defects in human relationships. "Seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," said our Lord, "and these things (food, clothing, and so on) shall be added." If we find that they are lacking, does it not suggest that we have not sought God's Kingdom and His righteousness?

Obviously there is room for a great deal of improvement in the matter of health and safety, though we note with gratitude the advance of recent years. Perhaps a more serious indictment against modern industry is that it is a destroyer of beauty in a way that industry never was until a hundred and fifty years ago; industrial districts are for the most part hideous districts. Is the loss to human life through the destruction of amenities greater than the gain to human life through abundance and cheapness of commodities? In any case, could we not have most of the advantages without most of the disadvantages? I think that the answer is quite clearly that, just as we have been able to reduce enormously the number of accidents and the amount of industrial disease, so we shall find it possible to reduce enormously the ugliness of industry when we allow æsthetic considerations their due weight. God, who is a lover of beauty, will teach men by His Holy Spirit how

to supply their needs without making the world hideous.

One of the most serious indictments against modern industry is that it has taken away from the occupations of large numbers of men and women their interest and their educative value. The indictment would seem to be true, though those who make it do not always recognise sufficiently how much drudgery of past ages has been superseded by the easy methods which modern science has devised.[1] Use of machinery and minute subdivision of labour have enabled us to increase greatly the product of industry, to maintain a larger population, and to raise the standard of comfort for practically everybody. But if in order to achieve this increase in comfort we turn men into drudges, are we not paying too big a price? Are we not sacrificing life itself to the means of life? Is it possible to relieve the monotony, to provide compensating interests, to remedy in considerable degree

[1] *E. g.* lighting fires; see the description in Mrs. Gretton's *A Corner of the Cotswolds*, p. 148. Professor Marshall quotes jack-planing as one of the tedious and injurious forms of work which has disappeared. And he says that "for every hundred yards of cloth that are woven, the purely monotonous work done by human beings is probably not a twentieth part of what it was" (*Economics of Industry*, Book IV. ch. ix). For a less favourable and very able analysis of the reactions of machinery on human welfare see Austin Freeman's *Social Decay and Regeneration*.

the disadvantages of large-scale mechanical production without giving up the advantages.[1] If not, must we look to shorter hours and to more profitable leisure as compensation? Or is it desirable and feasible to retrace our steps some part of the way and to be content with a simpler economy? These are questions which Christians ought to raise; and if at present conclusive answers cannot be given, it is only one more indication of the arrears of information and of thought into which we have fallen because we have not cared. But, for myself, I am willing to hazard the prediction that when we turn our attention seriously to minimising monotony and increasing the interest of industrial life, we shall find that our product is greater and not less.

II

Our scrutiny needs to go deeper yet, and our criticism must be not merely of the results, direct or indirect, but of the spirit animating industry and commerce. We must ask what motives are actually operative, and which of them are worthy and which of them are unworthy.

[1] It is important not to confuse, as many people do, the necessary concomitants of the use of machinery with what is due to the use of machinery under the system and in the temper of the industrial world of the last century.

No satisfactory detailed analysis of economic motives has yet been made, so far as I am aware. Most of the text-books of political economy dismiss the question of motives in comparatively few words. The critics of the existing order very commonly over-simplify. Quite often in popular discussion of the subject the hope of gain and the desire to serve are opposed to one another as if they were the only powerful motives to be considered. Doubtless the one is, and the other ought to be, the dominant motive in industry, yet there are and must always be a number of other very powerful motives.

The following analysis is probably neither exhaustive nor a good piece of scientific classification, but it will serve for the purpose of discussion :

(*a*) Desire to supply one's needs and the needs of one's family, and the corresponding fear of failure.
(*b*) Desire of increased income ; the acquisitive instinct.
(*c*) A sense of justice : desire to get and to give a fair equivalent for money or services.
(*d*) Desire to serve others.
(*e*) Desire to create and to express oneself.
(*f*) The adventurous and enterprising spirit.

(*g*) Love of power over others.
(*h*) Emulation.
(*i*) A natural tendency towards co-operation.
(*j*) Regard for public opinion, *e. g.* of family, friends, fellow-workers.
(*k*) The impulse to imitate.
(*l*) Habit and inertia.

(*a*) The first of these motives is the strongest and most dependable of the motives by which the majority of men are actuated in their industrial lives, and it is due to its operation more than to the operation of any other motive that the greater part of the work of the world gets done. It may not be often in the foreground of consciousness, but it supplies steady incentive to steady work as few of the other motives do. Normally the positive desire is stronger than the corresponding fear. But the fear is in the background and operates as an ultimate coercion with most men, and there are some men who apparently are not strongly moved in any other way. Fear certainly causes many men to work harder than they otherwise would: employers commonly affirm that they get more work done when trade is slack and men could easily be dispensed with than when trade is brisk and men are in demand. Excessive and prolonged fear, on the contrary, demoralise men and make

them unwilling or unable to work well. The fear of being unemployed when a job is finished certainly leads to slow work on that job, and precariousness of employment is one of the great causes of restriction of output. Men of nervous sensibility are usually incapable of working well, and especially of doing the more delicate kinds of brain-work whilst they are harassed by fears as to the future. There can be no doubt that there are thousands of men and women who would do better work if they were freed from acute anxiety.

It need scarcely be added that the needs of one's family weigh far more heavily with most men than their own personal needs. The general result of this is that married men are on the whole more dependable but less enterprising than single men—as Francis Bacon pointed out in a famous essay.

This desire to supply one's needs and those of one's family is natural, and it is a motive which deserves our high respect. God places on all of us a special responsibility for our own welfare and that of our families. There may be occasions when we are called upon to expose ourselves and them to the risk and even to the certainty of want for the sake of loyalty to some great principle, but such occasions will be exceptional, and normally we are called upon to secure proper provision. It is important that we should have a clear idea as to

what the needs really are, to make the distinction which Ruskin drew between wealth and illth. And we ought to be unwilling to get good things for ourselves at the expense of harm to others.

It is not inconsistent with Christianity that society should depend upon the fear of want as an ultimate coercion to work. Our Lord appealed at times to men's fears as well as to their more generous impulses. "If any will not work, neither shall he eat,"[1] was the apostolic injunction. But it is a fear which should normally be very much in the background, and it should be appealed to as little as possible.

(*b*) More or less distinct from the imperative urge to satisfy one's needs and those of one's family is the desire, operative in most men but by no means in all men, to add to one's income and possessions. It is a desire which operates very unevenly in different men, different classes, and different forms of society. It is comparatively weak in static societies and in conservative classes, amongst whom must be reckoned large sections of the working classes. It is a matter of common knowledge that many workers, when they have earned enough to maintain the standard of life to which they are accustomed, do not respond readily to stimuli to increased production. This is also one of the

[1] 2 Thess. iii. 10.

recognised difficulties in the development of tropical countries by native labour.

By far the greater number of men and women, however, are strongly moved by the desire to acquire more. It is a motive which is usually found in combination with other motives: thus a man will desire to add to his income to enable himself and his family to express their personalities more fully, or to gratify his sense of power over other men, or perhaps because he thinks that he will be able to render more service to other people. But the desire for increased possessions, though usually found in combination with other motives, is distinct from them and sometimes operates singly. The extreme case is, of course, the miser. The acquisitive instinct becomes very powerful in our modern society because the multiplication of forms of wealth, and the methods and scale of our industrial system, give it almost indefinite scope. Accumulation becomes a habit and part of a philosophy of life: thus rich men assume that they must make a profit or take an interest without any consideration of possible uses for the increase of wealth.

The Christian needs to bear in mind continually our Lord's repeated warnings against the perils of riches.[1] A modest estimate of our needs and a strict moderation in satisfying them should be the

[1] *E. g.* Luke vi. 24; Matt. xiii. 22; xix. 23.

marks of a Christian life. The limit is easily passed beyond which an increase in wealth means a diminution in real life : getting money takes up too much of our attention, or we buy things not really good for us, or we injure our relationships to other people. "Beware of covetousness," said our Lord; "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"; and He said that a man was a fool if he laid up treasure on earth and was not rich toward God.[1]

(*c*) There can be no doubt that there is a widespread feeling that industrial relationships ought to be just, however far short of justice the majority of men may be in their practice. This sense of justice is witnessed to by a persistent belief that there is such a thing as "a fair wage," "a just price," "a reasonable profit,"[2] however difficult it may be to ascertain what these may be, and in spite of the denial by some, economists and business men, of any interrelation of economics and ethics.

A feeling of injustice in industrial dealings leads to a great deal of friction in industry. The workers feel that they are not being paid properly and that other people are getting rich at their expense, and deliberately or unconsciously they work the worse

[1] Luke xii. 15–21.

[2] See *Social Economics*, by J. H. Jones, p. 201.

for it. Employers feel that they are not receiving a fair day's work for the wages they pay and they resent it. Human relationships are poisoned and industrial efficiency is hampered.

Whilst a sense of the desirability of justice in economic relationships is probably normal to all unsophisticated persons, its persistence and its effectiveness depend partly upon its being linked to a strong sense of duty in individuals and partly upon the existence of suitable social arrangements. As commerce and industry are organised to-day there is not adequate machinery and there is no effective safeguard to secure that the wage or the profit is fair, that the price is just, that no party to a bargain is a loser. The older economists maintained that this was approximately secured by free competition, but few economists would make that contention to-day. Such State interference as there is, *e. g.* Trade Boards, is only intended to prevent glaring abuses, and not to secure justice in the majority of transactions. But in the absence of means of deciding what is just, the desire to be just atrophies.

" Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself " is the Christian admonition, safeguarding and legitimising our natural care for our own interests. " Give *us* this day *our* daily bread " is the Christian prayer, placing our needs alongside the needs of

others. A Christian society ought to be so ordered as to detect and to destroy injustice. "Righteousness" is the conception associated by our Lord with the Kingdom of God, and in this He follows and endorses the prophets. Justice alone, it is true, will not carry us far enough; Christianity is a religion of generosity rather than of justice; but to have less than justice in social relationships is intolerable.

(*d*) It is commonly asserted that the motive of service operates only feebly in our modern industry. It is probably a good deal stronger than is generally admitted. Go shopping, or house-hunting, stay at a hotel, employ a firm of house-decorators, transact any kind of business you like, and the strength or feebleness of this motive in those with whom you have dealings will make a great difference to your well-being. Naturally the motive is stronger where there is direct contact between the person rendering the service and the person benefited by it. The elaborate subdivision of processes, the vastness and remoteness of markets, the standardisation of methods and of products, have done a great deal to dry up the springs of service. On the other hand, everything which increases sensitiveness and imaginativeness helps, and for that reason, if for no other, there is great value in the efforts which are being made in some great businesses at the

present time to help the workers to understand the whole process of which they see only a small part.[1]

The desire to serve is eminently a motive whose strength or weakness is closely related to a man's religion or philosophy of life. It would be the dominant motive in a Christian society, though by no means the only strong motive, as is sometimes asserted. It is certainly not the dominant motive to-day. Each one ought to examine himself frequently as to its power in him, and not in himself only but in the group with which he is associated.

(*e*) The desire to create something and to express oneself is usually strong in men when its action is not blocked by the conditions of their employment. Where it is blocked, there frequently results mischief of one sort or of another: we can probably attribute to its frustration a good deal of slackness, a good deal of bitterness, and probably not a few perversions such as drug-taking, excessive drinking, and gambling. Where it can find even slight scope, it is probably responsible for a good deal of work, and especially for a quality of work, which none of the other motives will secure without it. It is amazing how it asserts itself in thousands of routine workers if only the smallest opportunity for

[1] See, for instance, the description of a Preparatory Works School in Mr. Seebohm Rowntree's *The Human Factor in Business*.

initiative be given them. It is often the dominant motive in men whose positions allow scope for it; and it is the force by which initiators in industry are most frequently driven. But for want of opportunity for its expression, this strong motive is wasted or misused in the case of most of the workers at present.

The desire to create something and to express oneself is part of the raw material of life which can be turned to good or to bad account. Christians ought to care that men should have some opportunity of living out their own lives, they should see that the social structure does not prevent self-expression. And Christianity should mean that a man wants to express himself in good ways, to create something good.

(*f*) Akin to this last motive is the adventurous spirit, into which both curiosity and pugnacity usually enter. It is a powerful force in industry, where it is allowed to operate without undue checks from customs or laws, and to it we owe a large part of the remarkable changes in human life which we call progress, and which we hope to be so on the whole. Many inventions, many new methods, and a great deal of the opening up of new countries, have come from men willing to take big risks.

Our Lord is full of praise for the adventurous and enterprising spirit and of rebuke of those who are

not ready to attempt and to take risks (see, for instance, the Parable of the Talents). It is the part of religion to stimulate men to enterprise, and equally to secure that the enterprise shall be for worthy and altruistic ends.

(*g*) The seventh motive in our list, the love of power over others, is another of the great driving forces in the lives of a great number of men; and it, together with the last two motives discussed, explains in great measure the fascination of the business world for men of unusual ability. Without it many of them would retire from business at an early stage of prosperity: as it is, the millionaire lives laborious days and builds up new businesses.

Abuse of power, and perhaps especially the abuse of power by those in positions of petty authority, causes a great deal of friction and resentment in industrial life. And apart from particular cases, there is a growing feeling amongst large sections of workers against the regulation of their lives by an authority quite external to themselves and without any sanction which appeals to their moral judgment. It is easy to exaggerate the demand for democracy in industry, and probably some of the intellectuals of the Labour Party do so, but there can be no doubt that there is a widespread uneasiness amongst the workers and a new feeling of their right to share in power.

The New Testament is full of warnings as to the danger of the love of power over others (*e. g.* Matt. xx. 25–28). Yet in any form of society some must exercise authority over others. Christianity recognises the need for leaders; it will not countenance tyrants. The real qualification for leadership is the will and the power to serve more than others.

(*h*) Emulation is a motive to which constant appeal is made in our social life. We rely upon it as one of the chief spurs in education; and we rely upon it, though to a less extent, in industry and commerce. It is an emotion compounded of self-assertiveness and of pugnacity, and it rouses men to efforts of an intensity and of a duration of which they would not otherwise be capable. Its operation is most powerful amongst the comparatively few who control industry and who have considerable freedom of action. It is comparatively weak among great masses of workers who have recognised under economic stress the need for solidarity; their pugnacity and self-assertiveness take another form and inspire them to collective efforts to obtain better terms from their employers rather than to rivalry with other workers of similar status. Emulation in its milder form gives the exhilaration of a game; where much is at stake, as, for instance, where the rewards of success are great or the penalties of defeat are serious, it gives to many men

the heightened vitality which is usually experienced during a fight.

Emulation, if we define it as *striving to excel another*, is a motive to which Christianity gives little encouragement. Our Lord's appeals to it have usually a touch of humour in them, as, for instance, when He suggests that His disciples should be more generous than the publicans and should worry less about material goods than the Gentiles. But the measuring of ourselves against others and deriving pleasure from a sense of superiority is distinctly alien to the Christian spirit (*cf.* Phil. ii. 3).

(*i*) The practice of mutual aid and support appears to be instinctive amongst men, as in other living species. P. Kropotkin, who has laid most stress on it and gathered a great deal of evidence as to its power and working, distinguishes it from love or sympathy. "It is not love or even sympathy upon which Society is based in mankind. It is the conscience—be it only at the stage of an instinct—of human solidarity. It is the unconscious recognition of the force that is borrowed by each man from the practice of mutual aid." [1]

Our industrial life, of which the chief feature seems to many people to be competition, is also an amazing example of the co-operation of many persons in many ways: it is indeed co-operation on

[1] *Mutual Aid*, by P. Kropotkin, Introduction.

a greater scale and in more complex ways than the world has ever seen before. And innumerable trade associations of all sorts—Chambers of Commerce, Information Bureaus, Trade Defence Associations, Trade Unions, Federations of Employers, and so on—are witnesses to the power of this instinct to co-operate. It is an instinct which combines with other instincts—it may be with pugnacity, or with self-interest, or with the desire to serve. But for all sorts of purposes, good and bad, selfish and unselfish, often unselfish within a group but selfish towards those outside the group, men do naturally combine.

And the Christian religion certainly fosters co-operation and teaches that mutual aid is part of God's purpose and method for human life. The solidarity we affirm by our act is a very real fact, and the closer and wider we make our solidarity the nearer we get to what life can be at its best. The Kingdom of God, which is to be the first object of our love and of our endeavour, is a society inclusive of all men and uniting them in a common purpose.

(*j*) Public opinion is in the main a levelling force, it deters an employer from offering wages or conditions much better or much worse than those offered by other employers in his trade and district, it tends strongly to produce a levelling, and more

often a levelling down, of effort and of initiative in the workshop. The public opinion of one's family, and usually of one's set, is a strong incentive to effort to achieve the kind of position and to maintain the standard of life customary amongst them. A man will often struggle hard to achieve something corresponding to the expectations which his friends have formed of him from early promise, when, if it were not for such opinions and expectations, he would be content with a lower standard of achievement.

Undue deference to public opinion is one of the weaknesses which Christianity should help a man to overcome, yet since our judgments and actions are shaped inevitably and unconsciously to a large extent by prevailing public opinion, Christians must not be content with anything less than changing public opinion.

(*k*) and (*l*) Imitation, like public opinion, is a levelling force, it tends to bring other men up or down to the level of pioneers. Imitation or suggestion is responsible for an accentuation of trade fluctuations by spreading caution or boldness in times of contraction or expansion of trade.

Properly speaking habit and inertia are not motives, indeed the latter is the exact opposite of a motive: it is the tendency of persons to go on

doing as they have done before. Habits and inertia are facts of great social importance. For instance, it happens quite frequently that some factors in a situation are changed without others being changed also, and practices which were suitable and harmless before become unsuitable and harmful in the new situation. Thus the hours of work in many urban factories were for years a continuance of the hours of work customary in and suitable to rural conditions.

Imitation and the power of habit can be turned to good or to bad account. But they ought to count for less and less as human beings become more conscious of the meaning of life. And since Christ came to give men the fullest life possible we should expect that in a Christian society life would be increasingly deliberate and purposed and that men would live much less by routine and at second hand. John Wesley has a passage in one of his sermons on the duty of innovation in industry; men are to use in their business all the understanding God has given them. "It is amazing to observe how few do this: how men run on in the same dull track with their forefathers. But whatever they do who know not God, this is no rule for you. It is a shame for a Christian not to improve upon them, in whatever he takes in hand." [1]

[1] Quoted in *Competition*, p. 42.

III

Our examination of the motives actually at work in industry and commerce shows, I think, an unhealthy acquisitiveness and a defective sense of service: for the rest, it indicates that motives which might be powerful for good, such as the desire to create and to express oneself in one's work, are not brought into adequate play in the lives of the great majority of men.

If, finally, we test the present relationships of men with one another in industry and in commerce by the great conception, central to our religion, of a community united by a common spirit and with its energies devoted to a common end, a society making provision for the expression both of individuality and of solidarity, it is obvious that our present industrial organisation fails heavily by that most stringent test; for, while there is to be found in it co-operation on an unprecedented scale, yet its salient feature is an unfraternal endeavour to gain personal or sectional advantage without very much regard to the interests of others. The dominant interest in most transactions is admittedly self-interest; the arrangements of industry are based upon that assumption, and they make extremely difficult any considerable deviation from it. Whilst, therefore, a strengthening and purify-

ing of individual motive is necessary, yet it is at least as necessary to examine the philosophy and the moral influence of existing social arrangements. In short, we have to examine the " system."

Modern industrial society is based upon private ownership of property and upon freedom of enterprise. It assumes that individuals or groups of individuals have a right to do what they like with their own; and that by their operations under the stimulus of self-interest there will be a satisfactory production and exchange of goods and services. Both these rights have always been subject to some control by the State, and there has been a great increase in that control; but they remain the presumptions and the foundations of commerce and industry. It is normally permitted to anyone, for instance, to start a business, if he has the power and will to do so, in any place and to buy and to sell any kind of goods or services at such prices as he can manage to get by bargaining. Prices are fixed by competition with other buyers and sellers. The assumption of the exponents and defenders of this system of private ownership and freedom of enterprise is that this competition promotes the most effective allocation of capital and of effort, and that it secures a distribution of product which is tolerably just. Adam Smith, and other early exponents, supplied a religious or philosophic sanction for the system in the theory

of a natural harmony between the interests of the individual and the interests of the community; that in seeking to benefit himself, an individual was bound as a matter of fact to benefit his fellows. On this theory there was no conflict between extreme individualism and the claims of solidarity.

The theory of a natural economic harmony has been well riddled, and it is seldom expounded to-day except in a very attenuated form. Economic harmony does not just happen; it needs to be planned and achieved. It is overwhelmingly proved that individuals can profit, in the temporal and material sense, at the expense of the rest of the community. It is also clear that the freedom of owners may spell something akin to slavery for those who work but do not own. The morality, as well as the efficiency, of the present system is challenged by large numbers of men and women. Its defenders usually base their case on the difficulties of finding a practicable alternative, and most of them admit the necessity of serious modifications.

If a stand be made on the rights of property, it cannot be admitted, as we have argued above, that there are any absolute rights attaching to it.[1] The justification of the institution of property is

[1] See above, p. 94. This is one of the two main contentions of Mr. Tawney's *The Acquisitive Society*. The contrary assumption is the basis of much of the argument in Lord Hugh Cecil's *Conservatism*.

that it serves human welfare; it should encourage diligence and thrift, and it should enlarge opportunities of self-expression. If some kinds of property-owning have the contrary effect—and it is clear that the absolute ownership of large quantities of land or of machinery by individuals or by groups of individuals can and often does operate so—then such property-owning defeats the very purpose of the institution of property and it lacks moral sanction. "My coal mine is my coal mine just as your coat is your coat," is a claim which Christianity cannot allow. The coat benefits its possessor and it concerns other people very little. The way in which the coal mine is used is a matter of vital importance to a large number of persons, and their welfare must condition any property rights allowed in it.

The arguments against absolute property rights apply equally to freedom of enterprise: we can no more admit that a man has a right to manage his business in his own way, without check or control from those who may be affected by his operations, than we can allow that a man has a right to drive a horse and cart anywhere and anyhow in the traffic of a crowded city. The claim that a man has a right to manage his own business in his own way is still often made; but, at least as against the State, it is more generally acknowledged that there is no absolute right of enterprise than it is acknowledged

that there is no absolute right of property. Limitations of property rights are very commonly denounced as immoral, whilst limitations of enterprise are only attacked as inexpedient.

But the important controversy to-day is not about absolute freedom of enterprise—*laissez faire* was mortally wounded a long time since—nor even about absolute rights of property, though that is a tougher heresy. The need for increased social control is extensively recognised. The real dispute is whether commerce and industry are best conducted by private enterprise more stringently conditioned, or whether it is better for the community to take on itself the responsibility of organising production and distribution. The latter seems *prima facie* more congruent with the Christian ideal of a community. Collectivism could take many forms: the State already provides several important services, *e. g.* the postal service; municipalities carry on a great variety of enterprises; Guild Socialists propose that the community should entrust the actual management of industry to those engaged in it; an opposing school believe in consumers' control and point to the success of the Consumers' Co-operative Movement. There is already a considerable amount of industry which is collectivist or semi-collectivist in organisation. But the difficulties in the way of making collectivism normal instead of exceptional in industry are many

and formidable. If we are to move far in the direction of collectivism of any kind, we have to remember that collectivism implies a collective will, and it is by no means easy to get and to express a collective will. If we are to abandon the higgling of the market as the ultimate arbiter in economic matters, we must be prepared to substitute for it at every point, not at some points only, an ethical judgment. There will still be the taking of risks and pioneering to be arranged for; and it is important that in any new industrial order we avoid the old half-forgotten dangers of rigid custom enforced on everyone by the community, with consequent stagnation and cramping of personality. The unity of the ideal community is to be a harmony of free and diverse persons.

The antithesis between individualism and collectivism is not absolute: it is one of differing emphasis on personal initiative and on social control, neither of which can be entirely dispensed with. Christianity does not offer any single formula: different situations have different needs. There can be little doubt that we swung too far in the direction of individualism during the last few centuries, and that we ought to move now in a collectivist direction. Opinions will differ as to how fast and how far we ought to go; and some will be more dogmatic than others, not always in proportion to knowledge. Any opinion given can

only be, in the present state of the controversy, a personal opinion or the opinion of a group: there is not yet any common Christian mind on this matter. To the writer it seems that Christians ought to regard with sympathy experiments in co-operative enterprise, and to give help where they can. They should at the same time welcome any steps taken towards a gradual transformation of industry, either by an extension of State control or by the action of those engaged in industry. And, lastly but of importance, they should avoid a blind spirit of partisanship, they should examine as carefully as possible the actual results of various forms of industrial organisation, and they should shape and re-shape their policies in the light of a growing experience.

As against the ideal, any organisation that we are likely to achieve will doubtless appear defective, yet it is still by the ideal that we must judge the present, and plan the future; no organisation of society remains justified, nor any of its arrangements, as soon as something better can be conceived, and it is the duty of our generation to seek and to experiment until we find a more brotherly way of carrying on industry and commerce. It is true, as we are often reminded, that unless men and women are fine enough for a finer form of society, we shall find reappearing in different guise the vices and tyrannies of the present form. But there is

reason to believe that they are already capable of something better, that the present system stimulates the less worthy motives and checks the more worthy motives. In any case the Christian Gospel is that they can be capable of something better. Competitive capitalism is not a form of industrial organisation with which Christian people ought to be content.[1]

[1] See Appendix I, " The Case for and Against Capitalism."

CHAPTER VIII

LOVE WITHOUT STINT

REPENTANCE, it has been said above, is a re-education and a re-direction of the whole personality. A man finds himself at one with God. He accepts God's purposes as his purposes; he feels himself bound to his fellow-men by the bond of God's love for them and for him. Since he believes in God, he has a hopeful outlook on life. He believes in the capacity for goodness of himself and of other men. He is learning more and more of God's purpose for human life. He sets himself, weak and ignorant though he knows himself to be, to live that kind of life and to promote it wherever he can. He sees everything with new eyes and judges everything by new standards. His identification of himself with God and with his fellow-men shows itself in a new attitude towards them, a new temper and a new energy. He knows that if he is to be like God—his tremendous calling, ambition and destiny—there must be no limit to his love. And this new love of his for God and for his fellow-men will show itself in qualities and actions

which our Lord continually commended: in humility, in service, in sacrifice, and in forgiveness.

I

Humility

"*Jesus came to Capernaum: and being in the house He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?*

"*But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.*

"*And He sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all!*" [1]

The disciples found it a hard lesson to learn, and Jesus had to repeat it many times. The sons of Zebedee put in an early claim for the chief places in the coming Kingdom, and to them and to their naturally resentful companions alike, Jesus explained that the Kingdom of Heaven was not like other kingdoms; it was a topsy-turvy Kingdom, in which the greatest were those who did not care to be great. But they could not understand. Even at the Last Supper, within an hour of the agony in the garden, Jesus was distracted by bickerings among the disciples. "There was

[1] Mark ix. 33–35.

a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." [1] And with wonderful patience and gentleness Jesus taught them again what He had so often taught them before.

It is not strange that the disciples were so slow to understand. The other conception comes very easily to men, and it has been worked into all our institutions. The desire to lord it over others, to aggrandise ourselves at their expense, is deep-rooted in most of us. It is one of the driving forces in human affairs. To exercise power over other men is a prize which many men covet, to whom wealth in itself is an allurement easily withstood. Many who cannot enjoy such power in reality indulge themselves in day-dreams. Malvolio imagines himself in the chair of state with an obsequious Sir Toby before him.

The domineering spirit is responsible for all kinds of mischief. The ambition of emperors and of kings has been the mainspring of many wars in the past; but only too often they could appeal with certainty to the same kind of feeling in the breasts of their people; to belong to a ruling race flatters the vanity of thousands whose real share in power is negligible.

In industry much ill-feeling and not a few strikes are due to the bossing foreman or head of department, the man who has been given a little power and likes to feel it and to make others feel it. One

[1] Luke xxii. 24.

sees it in the family too; the domineering brother or sister, or it may be some other member of the family, provokes a resentment which is often the worse because it smoulders unexpressed. And the trouble is not absent from the Church. Much Christian work is hindered by it. There are jealousies and rivalries, domineering and resentment in many committees. It is not always easy to get a dozen eminent Christians to work together.

The domineering instinct finds many subtle disguises; we easily excuse ourselves for forcing our wills upon others by saying and thinking that it is really for their best. "Those that exercise authority over the Gentiles are called benefactors," said Jesus with quiet humour, "but ye shall not be so."[1] So He might smile at some of our "patrons" and "philanthropists" or at the European races "civilising" the backward races and establishing "protectorates" over them. Even where motives are unselfish and real benefits are conferred, good work is easily spoilt if a feeling of superiority is indulged. The best of our foreign missionaries and the best of our social workers know the danger well.

The Christian religion reveals God stooping to lift man to His own level. God's goal is not our obedience but our glad co-operation; we are to rise from the status of servants to that of sons.

[1] Luke xxii. 25–26.

This is the encouragement and justification of those of us who are democrats. For if it is to be so between God and man, how much more ought it to be so between man and man. If God stoops across the distance to us men, then our human differences fade into insignificance.

And we need encouragement, for the difficulties of democracy often seem insuperable. It is easy enough to have the name and the form; hard indeed to get the reality. We know very well that we have not got it in this country. Great masses of ignorant men and women, sometimes apathetic and sometimes churned into excitement by newspaper or by demagogue; and rulers who have often a secret contempt for those whose suffrages they have to seek—these do not constitute a democracy. The case against democracy is easy to put. It seems to mean at best the rule of mediocrity, at worst the rule of the mob's favourite. The swift have to accommodate their pace to the slow, the weak count for as much as the strong. Those who know what is needed cannot move a step until they have convinced the blind and the muddle-headed. The wise have to commend themselves to the foolish. And when it comes to a vote, Barabbas is more likely to be the people's choice than Christ.

And there we are back at the Christian religion and the hope it gives us. For that was exactly

the method which God in His wisdom (that wisdom which seems foolishness to men) took for the redemption of the human race. In Jesus Christ He offered Himself to the free choice of the ordinary man, and the ordinary man preferred Barabbas. Jesus was the good man; Jesus was the wise man; Jesus saw the ruin which threatened the nation and pointed out a way of escape. But they rejected Him. And out of that rejection God wrought the salvation of mankind.

Everyone who has ever exercised any kind of authority, however trifling, knows the temptation to be undemocratic. It seems so much more efficient. It is so plausible to get things done and to let the excellence of the results excuse the lack of sanction. Or time is short, and so much is at stake; it is not a moment for democracy. The Cabinet Minister and the Government official are tempted to window-dressing or to politic concealment. In Labour circles there has been heard the doctrine of the "conscious minority," the enlightened few who must do a little tyrannising for the good of their unawakened comrades. And in all ranks of society there is a readiness to idolise the strong man.

But the Gospels teach us that the really strong man is not like that. Jesus had a high purpose and He worked always with a sense of urgency; naturally He felt the temptation to be undemo-

cratic; indeed it seems to have been the besetting temptation of His career. But He rejected it. He would neither use force, nor stoop to flatter, nor conceal any part of His thought. They should take Him and His programme with full understanding and free consent or not at all. Had He deviated from this position He might have avoided the Cross, He might have done an immense amount of good in the world, but He would not have been the supreme revelation of God and the world's Redeemer. God is a democrat, and He dared everything for democracy when He sent His Son into the world.

Yet the desire to excel is a natural one, and a man with ability will want scope for his ability. There is a false humility which may be spiritual asceticism or which may be pride or merely sulkiness. Our Lord did not decry ambition, He sought to give it another direction and expression. To James and John, asking for great places, He offered great place; they should be sharers of His redemptive sufferings. There was no limit to what they might do for the Kingdom of God; only in the Kingdom of God they would measure themselves against the task and not against their fellow-men. They would win authority over the souls of others just because they did not seek to impose authority or to turn it to their own advantage and glory. Our Lord Himself exemplified and

explained the paradox of greatness in the Kingdom; He served most and asked least for Himself, therefore men have yielded Him their all. He refused to compel respect or recognition, and men worship Him for it. Where there is a duty of leadership laid upon a man by God, he will be shirking that duty if he does not call others to follow him along the road which God has shown him; thus, our Lord Himself made tremendous claims upon men's loyalty. But it is always a commission to lead and not to drive one's fellow-men; and a man may serve God best by suffering rejection patiently and lovingly.

II

Service

The Lord Jesus said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." [1]

Service is one of the marks of the Christian life, to give should be our first thought rather than to get. And service will not be a forced thing, but the natural overflowing of our hearts, if we realise the worth of everyone we meet and the way in which we are all bound together in God's love.

One obvious duty of a Christian is to think seriously about his life-work. If the wrong career is chosen, if work is taken because it leads to wealth

[1] Acts xx. 35.

and distinction, and not because it needs doing and we can do it, then no amount of devoted service in leisure time can make real amends. God wants a man's whole time and not his spare time only. We must be dentists or Civil servants or journalists to the glory of God and for the service of our fellow-men. In the choice of a career there will be considerations of remuneration, of conditions of work, of health, and so on—these are natural and right, but they ought only to be subordinate conditions. The main reason for becoming a solicitor should not be to make a thousand pounds or so a year, but to help to make and to keep that just society which is the will of a just God. "How can I serve best?" is the test for a Christian. A poor reward for the best service we can render is better than a bigger reward for work of inferior usefulness or perhaps of no usefulness at all. "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Of course the range of choice in careers may be extremely narrow for some of us; we are not responsible for that, we are only responsible for doing our best within our circumstances.

The vocations of doctor and teacher and parson are fairly clear and recognised; but anyone who has tried to tackle social problems knows the immense differences there are in men and women of all these professions according to the degree

of consecration and self-dedication. The keen teacher, for instance, keeps an eye on the health of the children, notices the child who is breathing heavily through mouth instead of breathing through nose, and sees that the child is put forward for medical inspection; prompt treatment of adenoids may prevent a stunting both of body and of mind. The keen teacher will co-operate with parents, with Care Committee, and with Juvenile Labour Exchange; so that the choice of occupation on leaving school may at least be as deliberate and well-informed as possible. The keen doctor co-operates with the Medical Officer of Health and with all voluntary agencies working for the health of a neighbourhood.

Less obvious but not less real are the vocations of engineer and chemist and business man. They can make a big contribution to social regeneration if they care to do so. We look to them not only to supply human need, but to see that process as well as product promote human welfare. We look to them, for instance, to clean up our smoky cities, to stamp out industrial disease, to reduce accidents to a minimum, and they have a big responsibility in the matter of industrial relationships.

It would be affectation to overlook the fact that for most people at the present time there is little or no choice of work; their circumstances

force them to take what work they can get. Yet even so they can think about their work and wring an opportunity out of a necessity. There was a friend of mine upon whom misfortune came, and who like many another started to make a living by keeping a boarding-house at a seaside town. At first she hated her occupation and looked upon it merely as a misfortune to be endured. But then she began to notice her guests, to see how many were in ill-health or in trouble of one kind or another; and it dawned upon her that to make their holiday as smooth and pleasant as possible would be to render a great service to a great many different people. I remember from personal experience that it made all the difference to a tired, ill and worried man to receive attention which was thoughtful and not merely perfunctory. She had discovered the vocation of a boarding-house keeper.

A sacramental view of material things, such as is suggested in a previous chapter,[1] ought to make it easier to have a sense of service. If a house has such a power for good or for evil its making ought to be a sacred task. The building of most of the houses we know was not so regarded. A landlord sold his land for all he could get for it; the buyer cut it up into as many little bits as he could crowd houses upon; the labourers had no heart in their work; it was sold after a process of

[1] See pp. 72–80.

haggling in which there was an economy of truth; those who live in it nurse a sense of grievance about repairs not done or improperly executed. The manner in which it came into being gives to the house a character which is able to impress itself in some degree on those who live in it. And because every expression of character confirms character the builders also are worse men for having built it.

But a house can be built quite otherwise. The landowner may realise that homes are needed, and he may part with suitable land on favourable terms. The buyers may think of the lay-out with a view to the greatest possible amenities when the estate is developed. The contractors may take a pride in the goodness of their materials, the architects may think of the convenience of the housewives who are to work there, masons and bricklayers and joiners may take a pride in the building of a house which is to be a home. A house which has come into being so will have another character, and it too will impress something of its character on the tenants. And the building of it will have made the builders better men.

In one of the chapters of *By an Unknown Disciple*, the author describes Jesus in the carpenter's shop making yokes for the oxen. An onlooker wonders that He fits the yoke-pegs so carefully. And Jesus answers that He does not want the backs of the

beasts chafed nor the work of the ploughman made more tiresome. It is only imagined, but it is plausibly imagined.

It would be foolish to attempt here a survey of occupations which should have any pretentions to completeness, but it is not foolish to suggest that Christian men and women in different occupations should attempt such a survey. There are occupations which would show up very shabbily against the Christian conception of service, some because of customary practices which degrade them, some because the occupation in its very nature is not honourable service. There are few occupations in which scrutiny would not suggest improvements; there are many occupations in which there would need to be drastic changes; and there are some occupations which no Christian ought to enter or to want other people to enter.[1]

But in addition to their service through their profession, many will naturally and rightly wish to give of their leisure and spare energy. There are a thousand ways in which they can usefully do so. There are the boys' clubs and girls' clubs, with their great opportunities for friendship and leadership. There are the reading circles and

[1] In this chapter occupations are considered from the standpoint of the service which those in them can render; in Chapter IV they were considered from the standpoint of their effect upon those engaged in them; both standpoints are necessary in forming a judgment on them.

dramatic societies in connection with clubs and settlements, which are giving just the education combined with recreation which thousands of people need and can profit by. The Workers' Educational Association gives opportunities for more formal teaching. Those whose homes are in the country have a great chance of being useful in the village clubs and women's institutes, which are now spreading rapidly, and for which there is so great a need. Many public bodies such as Juvenile Labour Exchanges and Education Committees are glad to have voluntary workers, and there are innumerable ameliorative agencies, such as the Invalid Children's Aid Association, all clamouring for helpers. Some will feel that they can make their best contribution through political work, perhaps as propagandists, perhaps later on as members of public bodies. There are in addition a great number of educational and propagandist societies which are kept going by the labours of enthusiasts. The multiplication of societies is a by-word, but the objects of most of them are useful, and a few people, giving generously of their spare time and money, can often accomplish a great deal. Of course they can also fritter away a good deal of time and effort. The sound thing for most people is to throw their weight heavily into one or two causes rather than to connect themselves with a great many.

A comparatively small number will make their contribution through advanced study and research. Formal research is both difficult and expensive, but there are many who can accumulate sufficient accurate information to be of use in guiding future effort and perhaps future legislation. The two great qualities needed for social study, as for most other kinds of study, are imagination and accuracy. Steady repetition of the truth as to social conditions is sure to produce in time the public opinion needed to bring about a change, but it must be tested truth and not speculation which is announced. All of us, of course, ought to be good citizens, following with interest the conduct of public affairs, using our votes carefully, doing our share in the making of a healthy public opinion.

It will not be amiss to point out to those who offer themselves for social service of any kind that they ought to take their work seriously. A great deal of harm can be done by dilettantism or slovenliness or patronage. A voluntary social worker ought to be as punctual and thorough and regular in the performance of the duties undertaken as in the performance of the duties by which a livelihood is earned. And continuity of service counts for a great deal; those who run about from one piece of work to another are not likely to accomplish much.

There are two opposite dangers in social work.

The first is that we may not see the wood for the trees. And the second is that we may not see the trees for the wood. It is possible to be so devoted to our particular piece of work that we may not realise the unity of the social problem; all over the place one may find social workers pegging away at their immediate task, and indifferent, even hostile, to efforts different in kind. The temperance worker and the housing reformer, the club leader and the politician have not always realised, as they might do, that they are in different corps of the same army. The result is a loss of perspective and of stimulus; they become parochial; they do not help and stimulate each other as they might. And they do not have the vision of a transformed society: they wear themselves out to relieve suffering when they ought to be trying to prevent suffering, they deal with effects and not with causes.

The other, the opposite danger, is that we may be so dazzled by big schemes, so captured by ideas, so anxious to transform and not to mend, that we may neglect to do the humdrum, petty work which needs to be done, and without which transformation cannot take place. I have heard a prominent Indian lament that many of his countrymen who have had the benefits of college education are ready enough to write and to lecture on some subject with a high-sounding title, but that they are

not willing to do the humble, necessary tasks without which solid progress is impossible. This danger is by no means confined to India; there is a tendency in some circles over here to despise the work of the innumerable agencies which are quietly, persistently helping and educating a few men and women, boys or girls, here and there.

The word "palliative" has been very useful as a warning against superficiality and inadequacy in social action, but it has been a good deal overworked. By some it has been applied to almost everything which is not political action or political propaganda. It is legitimate to use it of the work of that kind of person who seems to imagine that he or she can do kindnesses to poor people to-day, and that in another generation his or her children will do similar kindness to the children of those who are being helped, and so on indefinitely. "Thou givest bread to the hungry," says St. Augustine, "but better were it that none hungered and thou hadst none to give to." [1] Mutual service,

[1] The whole passage is worth quoting:—

"There is a certain friendliness by which we desire at one time or another to do good to those we love. But how if there be no good that we can do? We ought not to wish men to be wretched that we may be enabled to practise works of mercy. Thou givest bread to the hungry, but better were it that none hungered and thou hadst none to give to. Thou clothest the naked; oh, that all men were clothed and that this need existed not! Take away the wretched, and the works of mercy will be at an end, but shall

not a one-sided relationship, is the Christian ideal. Here we can use the *a fortiori* argument from God's treatment of us. God does not regard us merely or chiefly as objects of His pity and help; He calls us to a partnership in service and in joy.

But much that has been stigmatised as palliative is genuinely constructive. And the same kind of work may be palliative or not palliative according to the spirit which directs it. To take, for instance, the sending of children from the slums for a country holiday: if those who organise it are content that it should go on year after year indefinitely, and do not conceive of a time when children shall grow up in beautiful surroundings, then their spirit is palliative and their work is palliative. But if they loathe and detest the conditions of city childhood, if they use such knowledge as they gain to make others loathe and detest them, if they give such support as they can to town-planning and clearance movements, if they rejoice to think that the child's stay in the country is making it country-loving and helping to generate an explosive discontent,

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the ardour of charity be quenched? With a truer touch of love thou lovest the happy man to whom there is no good office thou canst do; purer will that love be and more unalloyed. For if thou hast done a kindness to the wretched perhaps thou wishest him to be subject to thee. He was in need, thou didst bestow; thou seemest to thyself greater because thou didst bestow than he upon whom it was bestowed. Wish him to be thine equal."

then their spirit is constructive and their work is constructive. Or if one takes the work of helping cripples, which goes on in every great city, it is merely palliative or really constructive according to the outlook of the workers: if they are content to supply country holidays, or surgical instruments, or to train for cobbling or tailoring, that kind of agency might work till doomsday without effecting any radical change; but if those who are doing the work collect information as to the causes (as, for instance, tuberculosis from bad housing; rickets from bad housing and bad feeding), and use their knowledge to mould public opinion, and bring pressure to bear upon the public authorities, then their work is fine constructive work, which is hastening the time when such agencies will have little or nothing to do.

There is a diversity of methods of service as there is a diversity of gifts, and there can be a unity of spirit and of aim. Some can run a troop of Boy Scouts and some can bring about a slum clearance. One man will serve his fellows by communicating to them his own love of music; another will conduct an inquiry into the actual working of some recent piece of legislation; a third will think he does his best by trying to change the ideas and opinions which are the spiritual bases of society. Each must think out carefully for himself or herself what his or her contribution is to be. We must

not despise the smallest addition to the welfare of any human being, the cup of cold water given in the name of Christ. Equally, we must not rest content with anything less than the transformation of society, the coming of the Kingdom of God here upon earth.

Service is the Christian ideal for societies of every kind as well as for individuals. All that was said in a previous chapter [1] about the character of societies applies here. It is the duty and privilege of a nation to be serviceable in the comity of nations. It is the duty of a trade union and it is the duty of an employers' federation to be serviceable, not to its members only, but to the community through the industry in which it functions. The first duty of a limited liability company should not be to make dividends for its shareholders, but to serve the community. And if it should be said that it is impossible for a limited liability company to think and to act so, that would only be an indication that this particular form of human association was unsuitable to be part of a Christian society, and that some alternative to it needed to be found.

There is the more need to insist that the law of service applies to societies as well as to individuals, because there is always a danger that the duty of the member to the society will tend to absorb all his altruistic feeling and will be regarded as a

[1] Chapter III, pp. 53-55.

sufficient expression of it. The French sometimes say of marriage that it is *égoïsme à deux*, and one knows well that it can be so: the husband devotes himself most unselfishly and self-sacrificingly to the wife, and the wife devotes herself most unselfishly and self-sacrificingly to the husband; but the two together present a hard front to the rest of the world. That is, of course, the ground of the objection to the institution of the family by communists from Plato downwards. What is true of the married couple is true of every human society, corporation, or association. A trade union may be, though I do not think it often is, just a case of *égoïsme à quarante mille*, obtaining wonderful devotion and sacrifice from its members and ready reciprocally to go to great lengths in care and defence of them, but thinking that the duty of unselfishness begins and ends there. An employers' federation is likely to have less idealism, even limited idealism, than a trade union. Of the "sacred egoism" of nations we have heard more than enough, and from it we have suffered incalculable miseries, in the past few years. It is not enough to serve the society of which we are a member; we must want that society also to serve. Unfortunately large sections of the Christian Church have acquiesced in the view that sanctification is for individuals only, and that societies and federations and communities in their collective

functioning do not come under the law of Christ. Our religious thought and teaching are still far too individualistic.

One of the great difficulties in thinking of collective service and collective sacrifice is the doctrine of trusteeship. A man may be generous for himself, but has he the right to be generous for other people? We need not bother with the grosser parodies of this doctrine; with the solicitude of the officials of the limited liability company for their shareholders, so many of whom are poor widows, which forbids them to follow the promptings of their hearts in their dealing with employees. We can brush aside a good deal of hypocrisy and still be left with a grave problem. Is the statesman, to whom are committed the interest of his country, at liberty to be generous on behalf of his countrymen? Or is he in the position of a barrister who is fee'd to put the case as well as possible and to get the best verdict he can for his client, to play the game for his side and to leave it to the representative of the other side to play their game as well as possible?

The Christian answer surely is that the unselfish game is the best game. It is in the highest interests of a society or of a community, as of an individual, to serve. The statesman is not really doing best for his nation when he thinks only of his nation and tries to get all he can for it; he does his best

for his nation when he thinks how his nation could serve most. For it is true of nations as of men, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," though they are far from thinking so yet. And the same is true of all other associations of men. He serves them best who leads them to serve.

But has anyone in authority the right to force altruism on others? He has not. He can only offer himself as a leader in well-doing; it is open to them to accept or to reject his leadership. The practical difficulty whether a man ought to resign, or whether he ought to carry his associates just as far as he can, is one which cannot be covered by a formula; he must judge in each case which course will help or hinder more the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and it is often a very difficult decision to make.

Perhaps our conception of corporate bodies expressing themselves in service will be helped if we return to our illustration of the husband and wife. Marriage may be *égoïsme à deux*, but it can and it should be the exact opposite. When a Christian man and a Christian woman enter on marriage they usually hope and plan, if their religion is real and not formal, to be more serviceable in partnership than either separately could be. And the best marriages work out in that way. Each inspires the other, sustains the other, sometimes rebukes the other; they stir each other

up and together they plan service to their fellows. The same problem of trusteeship arises which we have been discussing; neither is quite as free to act as when they were single; each has to think of the other and to consult the other before taking any important step. It is not so easy to act promptly: it is not so easy to live to the height of the Christian adventure; but when the decision is taken and action is commenced, the two together are far more effective in service than the sum of their separate efficiencies. And so it is with societies of all kinds in varying degree: it is more difficult to have a common mind and will to serve, but if it is obtained even in the imperfect degree in which most human ideals are attained, the strength of such a society is enormous. If the constitution of a society be such that it can be organised easily for self-interested action but with difficulty, or not at all, for disinterested action, that is only an indication, as we said above of the limited liability company, that this form of association is out of place in a Christian community. All associations of human beings ought to be associations for loving and serving God and one's fellows as well as possible. It may take more grace to sanctify a society than to sanctify an individual, but the redeemed society has a power for good which is other and stronger than that which redeemed individuals can exert.

III

Sacrifice

Service deepens into sacrifice as we realise more and more the worth and need of those whom we wish to help, and as the forces of good and of evil come into sharper conflict. Christians are called to live in the present in the spirit of the future, to live on earth according to the laws of heaven. But this living in two worlds inevitably means strain and suffering. Christians are called to be pioneers, pushing forward the frontiers of the Kingdom of God on earth. Pioneers are often misunderstood and spiritual loneliness is the price often paid. Two or three generations ago to be a teetotaller meant social ostracism, and it still means petty persecution and quite serious financial loss in some circles. Sometimes pioneering work means the breaking of family ties; Lord Shaftesbury was not allowed for years to enter his father's house because he had made himself conspicuous as a reformer. Perhaps hardest of all to bear is the opposition of really good people, whose minds see in the better only the enemy of the existing good. Christians must be prepared for heresy hunts, they must expect to be called faddists, cranks, impossibilists, revolutionaries. And sometimes mugwumps, half-hearted individuals who will not

come down strongly on either side of a question: Christ must have seemed provokingly enigmatic to the Zealots.

A Christian may be badly handicapped in the economic sphere; his mind is full of other thoughts and his best energies are devoted to other ends. Men often get rich because their minds are set on riches, and because they have no ideals to distract them from their pursuit. There is nothing wrong in taking a good salary if we can earn it, but we must be prepared to forgo it if necessary. Poets and painters are often poor for the sake of art; scholars and inventors are often poor for the sake of knowledge; Christians must be willing to bear poverty for the sake of the Kingdom. "Blessed are ye poor."

When we talk of sharing in the redemptive sufferings of Christ, we often think of giving some conspicuous testimony. There are compensations to an ending on the scaffold: it is dramatic, at least one has the crowd's attention for an hour; there is the excitement to sustain one. Even to go to prison makes some kind of sensation, it is a protest which does not go entirely unmarked. But often the penalty is without the slightest element of the picturesque. The man who leads a protest against some petty tyranny of the warehouse pays a price for his opposition. He is not put to death or put in prison; he is passed over

when there is promotion. He might have hoped to become a foreman if he had been less outspoken, less honest in thought and word. As it is he remains a labourer. Or it may be a clerk who has ventured to think and to speak out. He remains a clerk in a very subordinate position. He suffers no active persecution. He just remains in his obscurity. Such a price is a heavy one to pay; it has been paid by thousands of unknown men and women, as true leaders of forlorn hopes as any in the annals of war. Poverty is perhaps the commonest form the cross takes nowadays.[1] I think of two of my friends, both men of fine intellect and culture, who in my judgment have been saying and doing just what needed to be said and done to awaken a sense of responsibility among Christian men: it has meant harassing poverty for both of them. It is not pleasant being poor; the shabby coat, the narrowing of life which comes to those who cannot afford to spend money, the necessity of denying opportunities to wife and children, the feeling of insecurity, the polite inquiries and the

[1] It is very noticeable how many of the reformers of the early part of the last century fell into poverty in the course of their efforts to help others. See, for instance, the notices of Thomas Clarkson, Joseph Lancaster, William Lovett, Zachary Macaulay, Richard Oastler, and Granville Sharp in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. James Hack Tuke and Michael T. Sadler were among those who sacrificed health. William Lovett, Richard Oastler, Joseph Stephens, among others, suffered imprisonment.—*Ibid.*

expressive silences of Mr. Worldly Wiseman: all these hurt. It is one of the signs of the working of the spirit of Christ to-day that there are so many ready to do cheerfully the ill-paid work of the ministry, to accept the precarious livelihood of a social worker, or to go to unlucrative and often dangerous posts on the foreign mission field. And there are business men not a few, who take risks and suffer losses rather than accommodate themselves to current practices which they hold to be unworthy.

To bear the cross is an expression far too lightly used; it is not appropriate to any and every sacrifice, but only to those which in bitterness and in completeness approach the sacrifice made by Christ. Not all are called to suffer greatly for the sake of the Kingdom of God. There are some who live tranquil lives, passing their days in quiet usefulness and winning the respect of men. God appoints some to walk in sunshine as He appoints others to walk in storm. We need not reproach ourselves if we do not see a cross in our own lives, certainly we need not set out to look for one; we shall come to it, if God will, as we walk along God's way for us. For to most Christian men, and for that matter to most earnest men of any creed, the call comes to bear hardship, "to fill up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ." [1] The call

[1] Coloss. i. 24.

may come soon or late. It may come in an unexpected way; we need to be watchful lest through dullness or cowardice we fail to answer it. It may never come at all. The readiness is all.

IV

Forgiveness

"How often shall I forgive my brother?" says Peter; "seven times?" and thinks that he has spoken handsomely. But Jesus teaches forgiveness on a new scale. Offences are not to be entered up in a ledger and dealt with by arithmetic.

One of the things most needed in the world to-day is forgiveness on a large scale. We are poisoned by the memories of past wrongs, received or inflicted. Eastern Europe is a congeries of hating nations whose mutual distrust is one of the greatest obstacles to economic recovery. How much it would mean to the world if France could forgive Germany! What a great thing it was for the world in the last century that the ill-feeling between England and her revolted colonies, the United States of America, passed away!

Labour men dwell bitterly on the memories of past cruel wrongs, and they sometimes blind their judgments in present disputes. Employers store up memories of derelictions of duty, of waste,

of pilfering, of slacking, of misconduct of various kinds; and their hearts are hardened against an examination of the claims of the worker. Where there is no forgiveness, hate breeds hate and the hating mind becomes the prey of an obsession. Talk to the average Ulsterman about the Papists, or to a Southerner about the negroes, or to a Roumanian or Pole about the Jews : you recognise different forms of the same disease.

Forgiveness is not easy. Perhaps the only way for most of us to forgive a cruel wrong is, as Jesus said, to think how often and how deeply we have sinned against God and He has forgiven us.

V

Love Your Enemies

" Love your enemies " was the amazing teaching of Jesus, and we never fathom it. We are not to wait for the other fellow to behave decently, we are to love him as he is. Moreover, it is to be love without stint. This is not a law in the sense of the Jewish law; we cannot measure our conduct and say that it satisfies the requirement. Christ laid down no precise rules; He gave few illustrations save the illustration of His own life. Our hearts must dictate to us what to do in any particular set of circumstances. Love is not incompatible

with coercion, by force or otherwise, when it is quite clear that coercion is in the best interests of all concerned. We are bound to put some restraint on children, on lunatics, on criminals, but it can be gentle and it should be the minimum of restraint necessary for its purpose. We are becoming aware to-day that in regard to each of these classes our restraints have usually been excessive and harsh, and that in so far as they have been so, we have not only sinned against love but we have failed to achieve our purpose.

The most conspicuous example of coercion by force or by threat of force is, of course, war and the preparations for war which swallow up so much of our time and energy even in peace time. The writer believes that Christianity is absolutely incompatible with war, in which a measured and considerate use of force is an absurdity, and in which by its very nature the aim must be to inflict almost unlimited damage on the other side. It is a method of coercion unsuitable to the purposes of love. And, indeed, what war was ever waged in a spirit of love? [1]

Where love does resort to coercion, it will do so sparingly and regretfully, with much heart-searching, and always seeking to replace it by something better. When people care enough, they can usually find another way. Jesus recommended

[1] See Appendix II, "Christianity and War."

frank expostulation and the bringing of public opinion to bear upon the offender.[1] And a word spoken boldly, sincerely and lovingly is more potent than most people realise. The reason why it is so seldom spoken is that so few of us are clean enough and sure enough of ourselves. What great Christian nation can rebuke the Turks for their abominable cruelties to the Armenians and feel sure that no *tu quoque* is possible, and that no well-grounded suspicion of ulterior motives will take away the sting and power of the protest?

Of the industrial conflict I have written elsewhere and I venture to repeat: "Those who are contemptuous of talk about reconciliation, because they perceive so clearly how long and how troublesome a road we have to travel, would do well to consider that the distortions due to ill-will and ignorance, the suspicion which accompanies half-knowledge, the acrimony with which controversy is carried on, the contempt so often manifested for opponents, and the policy of pin-pricks, do, in point of fact, serve to prolong the present conditions. They confuse issues, they divert men's attention from their real objective, they squander strength in a petty guerilla warfare which accomplishes nothing. If accusation and counter-accusation were clearly made and answered, if the strongest demands were courteously presented and the most

[1] Matt. xviii. 15–17.

emphatic refusals as courteously made, if there were less sulkiness and less spitefulness, it might indeed be found that the different interests were irreconcilable, and there still might be industrial conflicts, but at least men would know where they stood and what the struggle was about, and there would be a better chance of a clear decision being arrived at. But it is extremely probable that in many cases, if claims and grievances could be disentangled from irrelevances, they would be allowed or disallowed by the common judgment of both parties, or at least by the clear sense of the general community." [1]

There is, of course, a great deal of honest and friendly negotiation always going on in the industrial world, and a hundred disputes are settled quietly for every one which comes to public notice. But it is clear all the same that there is not enough frankness and that insufficient effort is made to understand the point of view of those on the other side. The employers, in particular, are very reluctant to put all their cards on the table; they will not, as a rule, give full information as to costs, prices and profits, unless they can be compelled to do so; but until they do so, suspicion is sure to be bred in the semi-darkness.

There are still employers and their underlings, though a dwindling number one would hope, who

[1] *The Other War: Chapters on Some Causes of Class Misunderstanding*, p. 93.

are annoyed by any complaint. Those who resent honest expostulation, and especially those who misuse their power and status to suppress or to penalise it, would do well to read that chapter in the Old Testament which describes an employer of whom it was said : " He is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him." [1]

Jesus was emphatic that we ought to deal with enmities in their very early stages. " If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." [2] He would have every occasion of worship an occasion of self-examination to see whether we are at peace with all men. " Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him," [3] He goes on to advise : common sense and religion are at one in warning us to pay attention to our differences before they widen into hatreds. Many disagreements can be adjusted in the early stages which if neglected become almost impossible of composition. Doctors insist to-day on the importance of early diagnosis, if disease is to be dealt with effectively : what is true of the body is also true of the soul. Only

[1] 1 Samuel xxv. See F. W. Robertson's sermon based on this chapter.

[2] Matt. v. 23–24.

[3] *Ibid.*, 25.

a miracle could have averted war with Germany in 1914: there was a time when the ill-feeling between us and the Germans might have yielded to treatment. A violent clash between the white races and the yellow races, for the control of the Pacific and access to adjacent countries, has seemed a possibility for some time now; it is rapidly becoming a probability; if it is not attended to, it will be in a few years' time inevitable. The class struggle is still in a manageable condition in our country: how long will it be so? Stephen Graham sees disaster hanging over the United States of America unless there is speedy improvement in the relations of whites and blacks.[1]

The distinctive and characteristic alternative to resentment and violent coercion which Jesus advocated was a going out of the way to do a kindness to the one who has done us an injury. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." [2] "Overcome evil with good," [3] is the Christian specific. There is a great need for Christian reprisals to be tried in many spheres of life. We know the end of the other kind of reprisals: Ireland is a sad witness to it in our own time,

[1] "Better than believe in meeting the great wrath is to be advised beforehand and to mend one's ways. Was not the Civil War a sufficient blood-letting? Could not the lesson be learned?"—*The Children of the Slaves.*

[2] Matt. v. 41. [3] Romans xii. 21.

and much of Europe. "If ye bite and devour one another," writes St. Paul, "take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" [1]—a warning which the nations might well have taken, might still well take.

In the Balkan wars of 1912–13 the Thracian villages were twice ravaged, once by the triumphant allies advancing on Constantinople, and once by the returning Turk when the allies had quarrelled and thrown away the fruits of victory. In many places in Thrace villages are found in pairs, a Mohammedan village and a Christian village a mile or two apart. As the allies advanced, the inhabitants of the Mohammedan villages were plundered, killed or outraged. When the Turks returned in triumph they proceeded to plunder, kill, or outrage the inhabitants of the Christian villages. It was the old familiar story of reprisals. But there was one Christian village situated near two Mohammedan villages, in which, when the Bulgarian army approached, sixty Turks sought refuge with their Christian neighbours and were given it. When the Turks returned later on the inhabitants of this village were left in peace.[2]

Even in the carnival of hate which disgraced

[1] Gal. v. 15.

[2] See the *Report of the International Commission* (*Carnegie Endowment*) *on the Causes and Conduct of the Balkans Wars*, p. 134.

Christendom from 1914 to 1918 the Christian way of dealing with evil did not entirely lack illustration. There were many instances of kindness shown by combatants to men on the other side, when they got an opportunity of expressing their real natures; for the war was a conspicuous example of the way in which men find themselves doing things they loathe because they have allowed collective morality to lag far behind the morality of the average individual. But probably the most striking example, a quite deliberate practice of Christian reprisals, was the establishment of the Emergency Committee for the Assistance of Germans, Austrians and Hungarians in Distress,[1] which did so much for interned Germans and Austrians and for prisoners of war. Its foundation and work in this country prompted the foundation in Germany of the corresponding Auskunfts-und Hilfstelle für Deutsche im Ausland und Auslaender im Deutschland.

It has often been asserted that the precept "Love your enemies" applies only to personal relationships and not to the relationships of nations. Recent scholarship tends in another direction.[2]

[1] See *St. Stephen's House*, ed. A. B. Thomas.

[2] See *The Political Relationships of Christ's Ministry*, by Stephen Liberty; *The Christ of Revolution*, by J. R. Coates; *Towards the Understanding of Jesus*, by V. G. Simkhovitch; *The Beginnings of Christianity*, by F. J. Foakes Jackson, p. 289; and an article on "Christianity and the Western World," by Miss Dougall in the *Modern Churchman* for Oct. 1922.

It seems likely that the public teaching of Jesus was very much influenced by the political situation, and that when He taught love of enemies He was opposing the common attitude of His countrymen to foreigners, and especially to the Roman oppressors. He showed a better way than that of the Zealots. Love without stint is the counsel of Jesus for nations as for individuals. It cost Him His life; but the wonder and the glory of His death are winning the world slowly to the way of love.

Naturally forgiveness and sacrificial love are more difficult achievements for communities than for individuals, as all collective action is more difficult than individual action. But the effect and influence of acts of collective goodwill and self-forgetting love would also be immeasurably greater than the effect and influence of individual acts of the same kind. The war has given us glimpses of what might be the power of a community dominated by a single purpose and bending its energies to a single end; the situation approximated sufficiently closely to that in most of the belligerent countries. Supposing love and not hate, nor even self-preservation, were the dominating motive! What might not a community achieve? We might have the spectacle, long dreamed of in Quaker circles, of a martyr nation, suffering patiently at the hands of

its enemies, and winning the world by its suffering. It is unnecessary to say that no nation is within sight or even conception of such consummate self-giving. Yet it may be that peace will not be established on this earth without some such Calvary, where there shall be not one but many willing sufferers at the hands of sinners.

But this is speculation. We are on surer ground when we assume that there will have to be much collective sacrifice as well as much individual sacrifice before the Kingdom of God is established on earth.

The Christian teaching of unfailing love is applicable to the class conflict quite as much as to the conflicts between nations. The oppressed classes are right to struggle for justice and for the establishment of a better social order, but they are only Christian in so far as they struggle in a spirit of love and use methods which are compatible with love. There are those who wish to abolish class by persuading men to love one another more, and there are those who are trying to abolish class by deepening and concentrating class hatred. The objective is conceived to be the same; the methods recommended are very different. The difference in method, and the profound difference in spirit from which it issues makes an ill-concealed cleavage in the Labour Movement and in many of the

Socialist Societies. The existence of the two tempers is very evident in the Labour press and literature.

Strikes are often said to be analogous to war, and they are often condemned on that ground, and curiously enough by those who allow war to be sometimes necessary and legitimate. But the comparison is rather ridiculous; the damage done in a strike is trifling in comparison with the damage done in war; and whilst evil passions are often aroused in a strike, they are neither excited nor is opportunity given to them to anything like the same extent. To refuse to dig coal or to unload a ship is very different to blowing a man's head off with a hand grenade or participating in a hundred other of the devilries of war. At the same time any thoughtful labour man would admit that the strike is a clumsy and harmful weapon, and that as the scale of organisation becomes wider, the likelihood of inflicting heavy damage on large numbers of people becomes greater. The lock-out is even more objectionable than the strike, because it usually means that men who will suffer comparatively little inflict suffering on men who will suffer a great deal.

What place is there in the industrial struggle for the distinctive Christian method of overcoming evil by returning good for it? Employers often

complain bitterly of the conduct of their employees. "They slack, they pilfer, they waste our material, they injure expensive machinery by their carelessness." It may be so. What then? "*Whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*"[1] Might not Christ say to an employer who thought himself wronged: "Because they wrong you, be the more sure to deal generously with them, be the more careful to study their interests?" And might He not say in the same way to the workers: "You think yourselves wronged, cheated of your due, made to labour under bad conditions. It may be so. Return good for evil; be the more zealous in your work, the more considerate of your employer's interests?"

Hard doctrine, but I think Christian doctrine. I do not know that an outsider to industry has a right to say much about it. And as to all this matter of forgiving without limit, of loving one's enemies, of returning good for evil, it is best to say and to write sparingly. Our own practice needs attending to before we prescribe for other people.

"It is quite vain," says Canon Peter Green, "to expect the coming of Christ's Kingdom in national and international affairs while most Christians not only make no effort to apply His teaching in daily life, but have not realised that

[1] Romans v. 8.

there is any obligation to try and do so. As well might we expect that a child who could not yet speak plainly to his nurse in the nursery when asking for his bread-and-milk would nevertheless deliver an eloquent speech at the City Council on civic affairs, or at the Hague on international peace. Let the reader ask himself, how many times he can remember performing any of the following obvious and elementary Christian duties :

" (i) Replying gently, pleasantly, and in a gracious manner to some unprovoked rudeness.

" (ii) Forgiving some real injury. I don't mean consenting to say no more about it after an apology has been offered, and one's pride satisfied by an admission on the offender's part that he was wrong, but quietly and with as little fuss as if no injury had ever been done.

" (iii) Admitting a fault and frankly asking forgiveness.

" But if in private life few people believe in the value of the maxims, ' Resist not evil,' ' Love your enemies,' ' Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good,' what is the good of expecting the application of Gospel principles in the far more difficult and complicated field of public life ? " [1]

[1] *Personal Religion and Public Righteousness*, p. 109.

This is admirably put.

Have you any enemies?

"God commended His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." [1]

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." [2]

[1] Romans v. 8. [2] 1 John iv. 11.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRIUMPH OF GOD'S PURPOSE

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

"Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." [1]

I

CHRISTIANITY is not an ascetic religion. It does not recognise pain and sacrifice as good in themselves; they are only good as the necessary price of something better. Jesus endured the cross "for the joy that was set before Him" (Heb. xii. 2). The beatitudes are pronounced on those who suffer, but each one is a promise of joy. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." "Blessed are ye that hunger: for ye shall be filled." Chris-

[1] Matt. xiii. 44–46.

tianity is far removed from the Stoic spirit which seeks to detach men from their natural interests, to escape pain at the expense of deadening joy as well, to refuse as far as may be the risks and adventure of life. Christ taught rather that men should lay hold on life in the confidence that life was good, that the purchase price of the best life was small by comparison and infinitely worth while. He would not give up life, even life on this earth, with all its limitations, as a rather bad job : on the contrary, He believed in the goodness of life because He believed in the goodness of God who gave it.

He was sure of God's power to achieve His purpose, though it is rather comforting to know that He had His black moments like the rest of us (*e. g.* " When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth ? " Luke xviii. 8). Note the easy confidence of His reply to the disciples when they came in alarm to tell Him of the anger of the Pharisees : " Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone." [1] One of the psalmists wrote : " Fret not thyself because of evil-doers," [2] and we most of us need the advice. Bad men seem to prosper, whilst good men often have a very thin time. Rascals go about in their automobiles and spend money like water, whilst conscientious, hard-working men and women have the greatest difficulty in

[1] Matt. xv. 13. [2] Ps. xxxvii. 1.

making a living at all. Details may differ, but the essentials of the situation are the same in Christ's time, or seven hundred years earlier, or in our own day. To sensitive, aspiring souls who mark how precarious an existence, how slender a hold on life, the best men and the best causes seem to have, this world must often seem to be

> " an unweeded garden,
> That grows to seed : things rank and gross in nature
> Possess it merely."

A humane experiment of promise like " The Little Commonwealth," a much-needed effort to promote better understanding like the League of Faith and Labour, a fine attempt to raise the level of recreation such as the Horniman Repertory Theatre, struggles a little while for existence and then only too often ceases for lack of support; whilst the music-hall or the racecourse or the dubious company promotion, pandering to the worse side of human nature, are blatantly successful. The public ministry of Jesus Himself only lasted three years : His contemporaries could not endure Him any longer. It requires tremendous courage to believe in the triumph of good over evil.

It was just such courage which Jesus had and sought to communicate to others. " Fear not, only believe," [1] was a word characteristic of Him. One

[1] Luke viii. 50.

saint of the last century said that those words were the essence of the gospel.[1] "How is it that ye have no faith?"[2] "O ye of little faith!"[3] are typical rebukes. His own faith was such that in sight of Jerusalem, and with foreknowledge of the refusal and of the shameful death which would almost certainly be the answer to His last appeal, He could still say to His disciples: "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."[4] And in this faith in God He walked into the jaws of death.

His faith was vindicated. After the crucifixion there came the resurrection with power. The executed Galilæan helped to shape history long after the dynasty of Herod was ended, the power of the priests and scribes was broken, and the great Roman Empire had dissolved in ruin. The forces which seemed to break Him were broken and His strength was shown to be greater than theirs. And the end is not yet.

People often talk as if bad conditions could last

[1] Bishop Lee King, quoted in Forbes Robinson's *Letters to His Friends*, p. 188.
[2] Mark iv. 40. [3] Matt. vi. 30.
[4] Mark xi. 22, 23.

indefinitely. It is not so. If London or Liverpool or Leeds is not what God wants it to be, London or Liverpool or Leeds is going to be changed. If the way of human progress is blocked by an evil institution, by slavery or by the drink traffic or by war, that evil institution will go. A guilty society can have its choice : it can repent or it can end in catastrophe. It cannot remain as it is. The decay of the Roman Empire, the swifter collapse of the old order in France in 1789, the explosion of Europe in August 1914, were all of them vindications of the moral order of the world : rottenness, tyranny, greed and mutual suspicion lasted long but could not last indefinitely. Less spectacular and therefore less noticed, but even more important, are those slower or speedier transformations when a society purges itself of an evil; the disappearance of serfdom in mediæval England, the abolition of slavery over most of the world in the last century, the emancipation of women which has taken place in our own generation. Repentance or destruction are always the alternatives, though judgment may be long delayed. We are told sometimes in picturesque phrase, and I think truly, that Hell or Utopia is the choice for our world to-day; we have not yet made the final decision, though we seem to be inclining to the former. It was the same choice for Jesus' own nation in Jesus' time. They might realise the destiny which God had planned for them,

by becoming a holy and merciful nation, a light to lighten the Gentiles; or they might harden their hearts in self-righteousness, brood over their wrongs, and imagine mischief against their enemies. They did the latter, and they brought upon themselves the ruin which Jesus foresaw. But it might have been otherwise. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" [1] was the lament of our Lord over His country's capital.

It is poor consolation to us, as it was to Him, that persistence in sin brings ruin in its train; we are much more concerned that sinners should repent and that there should be built up the Kingdom of God, to which the destruction of evil is at best preliminary. It is not so easy to show regeneration as it is to show damnation; bad things have a way of striking our imagination as good things do not; wars force themselves upon our attention more than periods of peace, divorce and crime are good copy for the newspapers, where the chronicle of normal, happy lives would be dull reading. Changes come so gradually, and causes of change are so complex, that it is not easy to pick out the triumphs of Christianity, to show how it has operated and where it has achieved. Yet it is a task which must not be shirked.

[1] Luke xix. 42.

II

"We often hear the assertion that no one can tell whether Christianity would work, because Christianity has never been tried.

"I deny it. Christianity has been tried, both in private and in social life. . . .

"It is true enough that there has never been a social order which was Christian from top to bottom. . . . It is unjust to Christianity to call our civilisation Christian; it is unjust to our civilisation to call it unchristian. It is semichristian." [1]

Rauschenbusch gives several examples of institutions which have been transformed, mainly by the power of Christianity. He contrasts the despotism and exploitation of a normal ancient family with the friendliness and mutual helpfulness of a normal modern family: He contrasts the coercion and corruption of religious life in the past with its purity to-day. He points to education as one of the results of the spread of Christianity: there is a growing respect for the personalities of children; brutality has very largely disappeared from our schools. In political life, aristocratic privileges have been enormously reduced. Bribery is exceptional and condemned, whereas it used to be normal and unblushing. Punishment is less cruel and more remedial.

[1] Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianising the Social Order.*

Before we pass to consider the work of avowed Christians, let us remind ourselves that God's purposes are often helped by men who do not acknowledge allegiance to Christ, and sometimes by men who violently repudiate it. We ought to be thankful for every growth in kindness and justice, for every championship of right. The world is nearer to being what God wanted it to be because Gautama Buddha taught kindness to men and to animals, and because Confucius taught reasonableness. It is a better place because of the courageous humanitarianism of Voltaire in the eighteenth century, because of the zeal for social reform of men like Robert Owen and George Jacob Holyoake in the nineteenth century—yes, and for Charles Bradlaugh's willingness to suffer in the cause of intellectual honesty. We Christians need to learn the wide appreciativeness of our Master and to be glad whenever work which God wants done is done. But of course we think that God's work is best done by those who realise it as His work and are conscious of communion with Him, and that it ought to be done best of all by those who have recognised the fullest revelation of His nature in Jesus Christ.

When we turn to consider the record of Christians and of the Christian Church we find that it is curiously mixed and inconsistent. From the ranks of the Christians have come the great reformers, and

at the same time these reformers have usually had to struggle against the apathy or hostility of their fellow-Christians. And the reformers themselves have been reformers in streaks. John Newton, devout soul, enjoys communion with God as he sits in the cabin of the slave ship, and he feels only slight compunction at the nature of the trade in which he is engaged. But years afterwards there comes to him for help in time of spiritual stress a young man named William Wilberforce, and this young man is to fight and to win, in God's strength, the battle for the abolition of the slave trade. Yet William Wilberforce is to be the deadly enemy of democracy at home. Lord Shaftesbury, another product of the great evangelical revival, is the pioneer of factory legislation; one of his ablest opponents is John Bright. John Bright, a great Christian also, is a leader of the crusade for the repeal of the Corn Laws, which are keeping the bulk of the population in semi-starvation; he finds it hard to understand how a professing Christian like Lord Shaftesbury can speak and vote for their retention.[1]

[1] It is easy to be cynical at the spectacle of the manufacturer denouncing the sins of the landowner, whilst the landowner denounces the sins of the manufacturer. And it is clear that the bias of class and of interest blinded the eyes of each to shortcomings nearest home. But it is not the whole of the story. The biographies of Shaftesbury and of Bright bring out one or two curious parallelisms. Each began by thinking

The record of the Christian Churches as corporate bodies is similarly equivocal. They have been champions of liberty, and they have been among the greatest opponents of liberty; they have stood for humanitarian ideals, they have stood against them. Pronouncements have been made and discipline has been exercised in both directions. They have urged men to be compassionate far more often than they have urged men to be just. Their worst failing has been a persistent dread of freedom of thought. Of the clergy as a body Oliver Wendell Holmes said truly as well as wittily that they have played the part of the fly-wheel in our modern world; they have carried it along in its dullest moments by their momentum, they have also checked any great increase in the rate of progress.

Yet out of the unsatisfactory Churches the

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the other a humbug, and came later on to believe in his sincerity. The opposition of each to the reform pressed by the other was only half-hearted; Shaftesbury did not defend the Corn Laws with one quarter of the vigour which he put into his agitation for Factory Acts, nor did Bright oppose the Factory Acts with the same conviction which he put into his Anti-Corn Law efforts. Their positive enthusiasms never dwindled, but their oppositions slackened as time went on. Bright never opposed legislation for the protection of children; Shaftesbury came to see the necessity of repealing the Corn Laws. And each set his own house in order as far as he could; Bright was a good employer, and Shaftesbury made improvements on the family estates as soon as he had power to do so.

majority of social reformers have come, unsatisfactory themselves in many ways and yet the pioneers of the race. It is often difficult to see how public opinion has been changed and how abuses have disappeared, but that there has been an enormous advance ought to be clear to any reader of history. Read Josephus or Gibbon, turn the pages of Pepys' Diary, look at the Recollections of Sir Algernon West, or read Mrs. Sturge Gretton's *A Corner in the Cotswolds*, and you will come upon records of callousness which would be impossible to-day. Public opinion would not tolerate to-day the crucifixion of disobedient servants, or the hanging of young boys for theft, or the exposure of heads and limbs of executed criminals in public places, or the exhibition of lunatics for the public amusement. Slavery is gone from Christian countries and the duel has gone. There is a new conscience about war, it has to be apologised for and excused, and it is felt as a disgrace to humanity as it used not to be felt.

The story of negro slavery illustrates very well the way in which Christians have been on both sides in a great moral struggle. It was by men who were nearly all of them nominal Christians and many of them sincere Christians, that the slave trade was started. One of the earliest traffickers in negroes was John Hawkins, who used for the purpose a vessel called the "Jesus," apparently

without the least sense of incongruity. Few Christian men in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries felt any qualms about the slave trade, and when it was attacked there were plenty of parsons who found scriptural reasons why the black man should be in servitude to the white man. But it is also true that the struggle for the abolition of negro slavery was initiated and carried through almost entirely by men who were prompted to it by their Christianity. The Quakers were pioneers in this, as in so many other noble causes. In 1774 the Quakers of Pennsylvania, at the prompting of John Woolman, forbade their members to own slaves. About the same time William Wilberforce was launching in England his attack upon the slave trade. The English reformers reached their objective much sooner than their American brothers. Already in 1772 it had been decided that there was no law allowing the holding of slaves in England. The slave trade was declared illegal by the British Parliament in 1807. In 1833 the slaves of the West Indies were set free at a cost of £20,000,000 to the British taxpayers. It was not till 1863 that Abraham Lincoln issued his famous proclamation freeing the slaves of the United States of America.

This victory was won, as most victories of the kind have been won, at the cost of big sacrifices by the pioneers. One of the most prominent of the

abolitionists was Zachary Macaulay. He was sent as a lad of sixteen to be book-keeper on an estate in Jamaica, and at a very early age he became manager of it. He resigned in disgust in 1792. In 1793 he became Governor of Sierra Leone, then administered by the Sierra Leone Company in the interests of free negroes. His health broke down in 1795 and he had to leave, whereupon he took passage from Africa to the West Indies in a slave ship in order to see for himself what the middle passage was like. He returned finally to England in 1799 and became an African merchant and prospered. But his main interest for thirty years and more was the abolition cause. He suffered much calumny; and his absorption in this work brought his firm to the verge of financial disaster. He was dependent on his sons in his old age; fortunately they were in a position to give him the necessary support.

A glance at the biographies of the other abolitionists will show that Zachary Macaulay did not stand alone in having to suffer for the cause. Both Clarkson and Granville Sharp were reduced to poverty by their absorption in work for the cause. Wilberforce was fiercely calumniated, but he does not seem to have suffered otherwise. John Smith paid for his championship of the negroes with his life: he was a London Missionary Society missionary in Demerara who had fallen under suspicion

of the Governor and of the planters because of his desire to educate the negroes; in 1823, just as he was about to leave the island on account of bad health, an insurrection of negroes broke out; John Smith was arrested for refusing to take arms against them, court-martialled for stirring up disaffection among them, convicted on the worthless evidence of terrorised slaves and sentenced to death; there was delay in carrying out the sentence and he died in prison.

One of the effects of the evangelical revival of the eighteenth century was a new concern about prisoners. John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, who did more than any others to improve the penal laws and the prisons, were both of them Christians and moved explicitly by Christian sentiments to act. The story of John Howard is another of the romances of Christianity. A man of ample means, already in middle life, he was made high sheriff of Bedfordshire. His duties brought him into contact with prisons and prisoners. He spent the rest of his days in magnificent endeavours to do away with the inhumanities which he found. He visited prisons all over the country, he gave evidence before the House of Commons, he went all over Europe to find out about the prisons of other lands. He spared himself no trouble or risk to learn the truth. At one time he accepts voluntary confinement in quarantine so as to know what

it is like. Turned sixty years of age he made the far journey to Russia : an obelisk marks the spot where he died of camp fever near Kherson in the Ukraine.

Gesta Christi is a theme which has never yet been handled adequately [1] and which needs for its elaboration a scholar or a group of scholars with wide and detailed historical knowledge and keen critical faculty. Nothing can be done here but offer these few illustrations. They are mainly taken from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, because it is a period of which I happen to know a little more than of other periods. But it would be possible to illustrate from the achievements of other centuries; one of the early triumphs of Christianity was the abolition of the gladiatorial games, to secure which the monk Telemachus sacrificed his life in the year 404. And doubtless the men of the future will point back to our age as the time in which great battles were being fought and some of them were being won.

Christianity seems to be winning in the battle with intemperance. There is plenty of fighting to do yet, but progress is unmistakable and victory is well within sight. We shall have a sober nation before many more years have passed. Already there is enough achievement for legitimate pride.

[1] This is written with all respect for C. L. Brace's book with that title.

One has only to read the *Pickwick Papers* to see how great a distance we have travelled in less than a century. To our great genial novelist (and social reformer to boot) it seemed a matter of course that a gentleman should get drunk fairly often, whilst teetotallers were to him just objectionable hypocrites. Drunkenness is regarded as disgraceful in most circles to-day, and a teetotaller excites comparatively little comment or hostility.[1] It is true, and it is a pity, that many good people are still supercilious about temperance advocacy, but the battle will be won without them.

There are many other struggles going on: the age-long struggle with gambling, where just at the moment it is doubtful if we are holding our ground; the battle against sexual immorality in its various forms, where there is new hope arising out of new knowledge and there is a possibility of a fresh and good sex hygiene. Infant mortality has been halved during the last quarter of a century. There are movements, curiously parallel to those of a century or so ago, for better treatment of lunatics and of criminals. There has been a marked amelioration of the conditions of industry, and there is at the very least a ferment of ideas as to its fundamental

[1] For an account of circles where it still may mean real hardship to be a teetotaller, and also for a criticism of some of the temperance propaganda, see my *Facts of Poverty*, chapter vi.

philosophy. The ending of war has come for the first time very close to the range of practical politics, some two thousand seven hundred years after Isaiah had a vision of a warless world.[1]

It is impossible for us, who are in the thick of it, to see the happenings of our own day in true perspective. And when the historians of the future come to chronicle them, they will doubtless find it hard, as we find it hard with regard to the past, to disentangle the threads and to say what part Christian men and Christian ideas have played. There will be the same strange anomalies as we have observed: men fine in streaks, fighting for God and fighting against God almost at the same time; Churches, certainly not in the van of progress, but throwing up every now and then pioneers to push the logic of their teaching to unwelcomed conclusions; men doing God's work but not in God's name. It is hard to get a clear view of the outward happenings, harder still to trace the spread or to track the origin of ideas. You cannot plot on a diagram the bubblings of the leaven.

Progress is neither automatic nor steady. Ground is gained and ground is lost again. There is advance in one direction and there is often at the same time a set-back in some other department of human life. There are long and terrible periods of general retrogression, and it is at least conceiv-

[1] Isaiah ii. 2–4.

able that we are at the beginning of one such period to-day. We need a long view to assure ourselves that there is real gain at all. There are Christians who deny that there has been any substantial progress, or that there is likely to be any. I think that they misread history, and that they miss an important element in the hope of our religion. The Lord's Prayer is not prayed in vain : in greater and not in less degree the will of God is done, and will be done, on earth.[1]

III

The last one hundred and fifty years have been notable for an enormous revival and extension of the missionary enterprise of the Christian Church. The power of the gospel is seen more plainly in the foreign field than at home, partly because the evils which it combats are so crude and so flagrant, partly because the message falls upon ears which have not been dulled to it by familiarity.

The grosser forms of cruelty and superstition have disappeared before Christianity over large areas of the world where a few generations ago they were unchallenged : infanticide, twin-murder, cannibalism, poison ordeals, the immolation of large numbers of victims at the deaths of chiefs. Blood feuds and tribal wars have been much diminished.

[1] See Appendix III, " The Idea of Progress."

Almost everywhere the missionaries have been the pioneers of education, and over a great part of the East the main burden still falls upon them. In Africa there is very little education of the natives except by them. Similarly the missionaries have been everywhere pioneers in matters of health: they have fought hook-worm, malaria, sleeping sickness, and plague; they have instilled ideas of hygiene. Further, they have taught new methods in agriculture and industry which have raised whole populations out of the slough of perpetual indigence.

Missionaries have contributed enormously to the raising of the status of women, chiefly by extending to them educational facilities and by the example of their own domestic life. Everywhere they have given self-respect to the down-trodden, the most remarkable instance perhaps being the change which they have wrought among the pariahs of South India. One of the great tributes to the work of the missionaries is that men of other creeds have been stirred to attempt reforms. The Brahma Samaj is a notable example of this in India, whilst the Buddhists in Japan and elsewhere have imitated many of the characteristic methods and organisations of Christians.

It is unfortunately necessary to distinguish sharply between the impact of the missionaries on the non-Christian world and the impact on it of Christendom as a whole. By Christendom we

mean those nations and peoples who have had for many generations past the good news of Jesus Christ: it is for practical purposes co-extensive with Western civilisation. The West has done much good and much harm to the rest of the world. It has taken its science and its organising ability, and whilst it has used them mainly for its own ends, yet there have been incidental advantages to those among whom it has used them. Governments have often given on a large scale what missionaries could only give on a small scale—the blessings of sanitation, of irrigation, of improved communications, and so forth. They have made some provision for education. They have given a stable and uncorrupt rule where before were confusion, dishonesty, and internecine strife. But the price they have exacted has been loss of liberty, and at times they have been guilty of crimes of the first order. The case for Western commerce and Western industry is weaker, the charges against them are more black. They have shown methods of industrial advance, they have in many countries raised the standard of living. But the men of the West have also trafficked in alcohol and in fire-arms, they have filched land, they have forced or allured men and women into virtual slavery. The advent of the white man has often meant the death of the coloured man; he has perished of new diseases or of new vices, sometimes he has died out without

reason easy to be discerned. It is at best a dubious proposition whether the non-Christian world is on balance better off or worse off for its closer contact during the last century or so with that part of the world which calls itself Christian.

It is abundantly clear that as means of intercourse multiply the missionary and his message are judged increasingly by the Christendom from which they come. It is not unreasonable that those whom we seek to proselytise should look for the marks of Christianity upon the Western world. But it is notorious that our many visitors from non-Christian lands are not favourably impressed by the Christianity of Europe and of America. The Japanese have copied from the West its industrial methods and its military and naval methods, but they have not thought fit to adopt its religion. Many educated Indians who have visited this country have commented unfavourably on the materialism and the restlessness of a people which professes to follow a great spiritual Teacher. In Limehouse there is a Chinese colony gathering in impressions of the largest city in Christendom: what they see of Christian England is not a particularly good advertisement for our religion. They do not go back home to tell their countrymen that they have found a people who have learned the secret of life.

It is not yet possible to assess the damage done to the cause of Christ in non-Christian countries by the War. Thousands of Indians and of Senegalese and of Chinese labourers saw Europe for the first time. It is to such people that we are sending missionaries to proclaim the gospel of love and peace. But they were not brought to Europe to be shown how the gospel of love and peace worked out in practice; it was for a very different reason they came. And some knowledge of the War has gone to the remotest parts of the earth. A missionary counselling peace in a New Hebrides village, finds himself twitted with it.[1]

We have every reason to be proud of the missionaries who go on our behalf to bear the good news of Jesus Christ to men who have not heard it. They have their faults like other men. They have sometimes been imperfect in their sympathies, not recognising sufficiently the reality and the worth of the knowledge which God has imparted to other races. They have sometimes been in danger of giving their converts Western civilisation as if it were part of the Christian religion. But in the main they are a magnificent body of men and women, and their lives are the glory of the Christian Church. If their efforts are not to be neutralised to a large extent by the character of the Christendom out of which they go, we who do not share their

[1] See *Midst Volcanic Fires*, by Maurice Frater, pp. 260–262.

hardships and their sacrifice must pray and work so that a time may come when every visitor from Asia or Africa or the isles of the Pacific to the Christian countries of Europe and of America shall see in the lives and social institutions and international relations of the peoples of those countries an embodiment of the brave, loving and humble spirit of Jesus Christ. For God's message to men has always to be embodied in human lives, as it was embodied in the perfect life of Christ. And it has to be embodied, not only in individual men, but in societies of men. It seems almost certain that for some years to come the importance of the impact of the missionaries on the heathen world will dwindle relatively to the importance of the impact on it of Christendom as a whole.[1]

IV

"*The wind bloweth where it listeth,*" and Jesus used the wind as a symbol of the incalculability of the workings of the Holy Spirit. We speak, therefore, as fools when we speculate about the time and manner of our next great visitation. Yet a

[1] On the social effects of foreign missions see J. S. Dennis, *Christian Missions and Social Progress*, E. W. Capen, *Sociological Progress in Mission Lands;* on the larger question of the contacts of Christendom and the non-Christian countries, see F. Lenwood, *Social Problems and the East.*

reverent speculation is allowable, and certainly we ought to be praying for it. It is the glory and the triumph of the Christian Church that it has these seasons of revival, that out of dullness and seeming deadness come amazing new life and vigour. When religion was a byword for rottenness, Luther arose; and to our eighteenth-century England, sunk in shameful lethargy, John Wesley was given. And we may hope that God will visit this generation in its need.

For that it is a needy generation who can doubt? The Churches, whilst not corrupt and perhaps not apathetic any longer, are perplexed and singularly lacking in power. They have obviously lost their grip upon the people of this country. We Christians are again a minority; most people nowadays make no pretence to even a formal Christianity. Equally obviously the new paganism is a decadent paganism; it has neither the strong, wrong beliefs of a live paganism nor the robust and reasoned agnosticism which, when one does meet it, has the bracing quality of a challenge. Most men and women are living in a muddle. Old standards of conduct have ceased to be respected and there are no new standards.

It is not only pessimists who are frightened; there are few thinking men who are not perturbed when they look round the world to-day. The international situation is bad: half-ruined nations

glare at each other across disputed frontiers, and lack the means rather than the will to hurt. At home we had a series of industrial crises, and if a period of comparative quiet followed, it was because the workers knew that the odds for the time being were too heavy against them. More than once since 1918 it has seemed as if a very little might plunge us into civil war. It is not at all sure that we can escape indefinitely if the conditions which produce these crises remain unaltered. *Tant va la cruche à l'eau, enfin elle se casse.*

As the nation has become pagan, family life has decayed, and we have seen an immense increase of divorce. (In this sphere, at least, the Churches may claim to have been effective; for very few indeed of their active members figure in the divorce lists, and it is regarded as a scandal when they do.) The swollen divorce lists are only one sign of a lowered morality; the columns of our newspapers indicate clearly enough the low interests and low recreations of great masses of our people. It is a time when fine causes have to struggle hard to exist at all.

There is no need to elaborate: anyone who is not uneasy must be singularly blind and insensitive. Without and within, on the surface and at the heart there is unrest, need and disease.

And yet it is not only because the need is so grave, the situation so desperate, the knot so

worthy of a God's intervention, that many of us to-day are hoping for a great revival of religion. To one who moves about the country it seems evident that the Holy Spirit is busy in our midst to-day. One great necessary piece of preparation is taking place, has largely taken place: the Churches are in humble mood, knowing their weakness and lamenting it. They will surely receive the blessing promised to mourners, comfort and strength from God. And in hundreds of little groups, here and there, sometimes attached to a Church and sometimes not, men and women are trying to understand the will of God for our time and in relation to our tasks, where we have gone astray and what we must do to be saved.

The next great revival, we may surmise, will be different from the revivals of the past: every great revival is different from the revivals of the past. It is possible that there will be no outstanding figure, but that the impetus and leadership will come much more from the co-operation of many minds. But this is mere speculation. It is less hazardous to predict that any religious revival which is to be of use to our day and generation, must be a revival with a strong social content, a revelation of the will and plan of God for human society. Men's eyes must be opened to the sordidness of our civilisation and, what is more important, to the splendid possibilities which there are. We

want the kind of revival which will make the people of any of our great industrial cities say to one another something like this: "We will rebuild this ignoble city of ours which cramps and distorts its children; it shall be planned, so that men and women may be healthy as God meant them to be. We will re-order our industry, so that it may be carried on by the friendly and willing co-operation of many minds and many hands, and not to the accompaniment of a sullen struggle for power and for money. It may take us thirty or forty years to do what we feel to be necessary and right, but we can at least set to work in hope that our children may see a city and citizens pleasing in the sight of God."

And what was done in one city would be done in a hundred towns and cities; and our dead countryside would have to be revived, as indeed it begins to be. And it would not be in this country alone, for the next great revival must surely be international in its sweep.

That the tasks would be tremendous is undeniable; the mere re-housing of our population is an enterprise to stagger the imagination, and yet the housing problem would be child's play to some of the problems which would have to be faced. Opposition, apathy, and the difficulties which even people of excellent will find in co-operating with one another, would have to be overcome as in any

attempted reform. But the Holy Spirit has the power to make men and societies plastic, to break down the force of old custom, to render possible what seemed to be impossible. The generous emotion of a great revival could transform what seems to us in our black hours an almost hopeless situation. But for the sustained effort which would be necessary, it would have to be an emotion which inter-penetrated with the intellect, generous feeling making use of clear thinking and being in turn sustained and prolonged by it.

We ought not to be daunted by the scale or the complexity of the task. Our generation has seen twenty millions of men taken from their homes, moved hundreds of miles, fed and clothed and taught a new (and dreadful) trade. New towns sprang into existence; new railways, new harbours were built; amazing new inventions were developed and brought rapidly to perfection; customs and prejudices, deeply rooted, were laid aside or broken down; incredible sums of money were raised and spent; suffering and loss unspeakable were borne with quiet heroism. All these things were made possible by the medley of base and noble passions which a war evoked. We ought not to set narrow limits to what we might do in the power of the Holy Spirit.

V

What is there at the end of the long vista which Christianity opens up? What is the goal to which mankind is moving?

Here we peer into a future beyond our realisation. It is impossible to say what limits there are to the improvement of human life. But one thing seems certain. Not even the best human life on this earth which we can conceive could satisfy God or the God-taught human soul. This earth is not a big enough stage for the whole of human destiny; and those who confine their gaze to human life on earth will see things out of perspective and will be without a clue to many of life's most puzzling questions. We need and we have the assurance of life after death.

For the individual there can be no adequate self-realisation in seventy years and within the limits of his circumstances. Which of us does not feel that he has powers in him undeveloped and which will not be developed now on this side of death? Those most favoured in their circumstances and in their mastery of life feel that: how much more the thousands who have missed their chances or who, perhaps, have had few chances to miss! Nor can we find more than a partial consolation in the

thought that our unsatisfactory lives, our sorrows and our strivings, are making possible a good life for our descendants. Even if we can work ourselves up to such an unnatural entire self-forgetfulness (which is certainly not the demand of Christianity) we cannot feel like that about our fellows. It is a perfectly right and natural feeling that those who sow and those who reap ought to rejoice together.

And if we could comfort ourselves with the thought of the advance of the human race and of the well-being of posterity, yet our hearts must sink as we reflect that at the end of the long road which the human race is travelling there seems to be the cul-de-sac of extinction on a planet growing cold and dark. We shrink from the thought that life should play the fool with us like that, and the Christian revelation confirms our instinctive recoil and reassures us. We Christians are taught that if God loves us, He surely loves us in unchanging and invincible fashion. He has other bodies for us when these bodies wear out, other worlds for us to live in, other experiences for us and other opportunities. "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." [1] His gift is life eternal, which is not subject to death and to decay.

The assurance of life beyond death satisfies our

[1] Matt. xxii. 32.

longings for ourselves and for those we love. And it makes it possible to believe that there is a solution of all those riddles of human life which puzzle us, pain and injustice and premature death. If life be a one-act play, it is at best tantalising, and often a sorry farce. If this life be the first act only, we dare to believe that we shall pronounce the whole to be superlatively good. And this belief purifies and strengthens our morality when we are tempted to live by mere expediency. The lower goods, the dubious means, the postponements and the evasions of duty, do not seem so foolish if this life be all. But if the issue which we refuse to face now is to be presented to us again later on, if fidelity to principle now be lasting gain, then our baser shifts and less worthy living stand out as clear follies. And a realisation of this, though it cannot be, and ought not to be, the mainspring of right living, is yet a reinforcement of our sense of duty which we should not despise.

Finally, let us remind ourselves once more that the eternal life which God gives is life in a community, and that it is only possible for us to have it if we are willing to identify ourselves with the community. It is the harmony of souls with one another and with God which makes Heaven. But this identification of ourselves with God and with our fellows can be begun, and must be begun, here

and now. And every such identification by a man of his interests with those of God and of his fellows begins at once to modify human society; so that in measure as men do so, the Lord's prayer is answered and God's will is done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

APPENDIX I

THE CASE FOR AND AGAINST CAPITALISM

It may be helpful to set down very briefly the chief claims made on behalf of competitive capitalism by its supporters and the chief charges brought against it by its opponents.

It is claimed that—

(1) It overcomes the natural laziness of man and induces him to work steadily.

(2) It encourages enterprise and confidence in oneself.

(3) It enforces responsibility: a man has to make decisions and to abide by the consequences of them.

(4) It provides incentive to men to take the risks necessary to progress.

(5) It teaches association on a large scale.

(6) It is democratic; the consumer decides ultimately what shall be produced, and thus economic power is widely spread.

(7) It is also democratic in that a man is free to sell his goods and services wherever he can.

(8) It provides through the higgling of the market for the automatic regulation of industrial life.

(9) It has raised the standard of living and made the support of a larger population possible.

On the other hand it is asserted that—

(10) Competition is unfraternal.

(11) The main appeal is made to the less worthy or unworthy motives.

(12) It divides society into owner-controllers and propertyless workers whose ways of life are different and whose interests are antagonistic.

(13) It is undemocratic: a few give orders and the great majority must take them, and the basis of authority is possession of property.

(14) The higgling of the market is an immoral and unjust method of arriving at decisions: the weaker party to the bargain loses, and the result is that owners and middlemen are usually able to exploit the rest of the community.

(15) The secrecy in which business is conducted is immoral and makes for inefficiency and ill-will.

(16) Capitalism is inefficient in production both as to quantity and as to quality.

(17) Capitalism is inefficient in distribution: the product is not allotted either according to share in making it or according to need.

(18) There is insufficient self-expression in their work for the majority of workers.

(19) Persons are sacrificed to things, especially to machinery and to profits.

(20) Capitalism is a destroyer of joy in work.

(21) Capitalism destroys beauty.

(22) Capitalism uses up natural resources unduly fast and without consideration of their possible exhaustion.

(23) Capitalism is a cause of wars.

In reply to the attacks on capitalism it is urged by its defenders that—

(24) Admitted defects are due to faulty motive and not to inherent faultiness of system: changed motives would change results.

(25) The abolition of privilege and of initial inequalities is necessary to the fair working of competition.

(26) Industrialism, and not capitalism, is responsible for many of the evils complained of, *e. g.* destruction of amenities of neighbourhood.

Books.—The case against capitalism is very ably put in G. D. H. Cole's *Labour in the Commonwealth*; see also S. and B. Webb, *The Decay of Capitalist Civilization*. For the defence, Hartley Withers, *The Case for Capitalism*. There is a very fair examination of competition in John Hilton's *Memorandum on Combines and Trade Organisation* (Garton Foundation). See also W. Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order*, especially Part IV; and see a volume of essays on *Competition* published by the Collegium. The scattered references to the subject are innumerable.

APPENDIX II

CHRISTIANITY AND WAR

THE position taken in Chapter VIII is an advo cacy of pacifism. It is done in charity and in humility, with a realisation that the majority of Christians think otherwise. The dilemma which a great many men feel acutely is that not to make war does seem sometimes to be delivering the world into the hands of ruffians, but that, on the other hand, to make war seems to contradict the very soul of our religion. As against the appearances of life the pacifist position is not easy to maintain, but against the teaching and spirit of Christ it is harder still to defend war. The writer of this book has had many moments when he has felt that he could easily give up the pacifist position, but he has always felt also that if he did so he must give up Christianity with it. It is probable that a great many men have felt the same, and that in a considerable number of cases they have adopted the latter course.

The writer does not pretend to see through the difficulties of pacifism, or to say what would happen if it were adopted on a large scale. It is difficult to

imagine that the suffering or injustice involved would be greater than those which result from war, and it is at least possible—and pacifists believe that it is certain—that the suffering would be effectively redemptive as the misery of war is not. The reason why most people will not look at pacifism is that they cannot imagine it as a positive alternative to war, they think of it as doing nothing in the face of wrong; whereas the alternative to war and to preparations for war must be a passionate and persistent demonstration of good-will. If this were tried it is probable that we should never come to those hideous situations in which war seems to be the only way out of the tangle. Pacifists conceive it to be the duty of the Christian individual, even though the nation will not behave so, to show good-will so far as they have opportunity; and they think that they ought to go on doing so, so far as their diminished opportunities allow, even after the pursuance of a different line of conduct has brought their nation into the sin and peril of war.

It is commonly thrown in the teeth of pacifists that they accept safety in war-time at the expense of their fellows. We do not allow that this is true. On the contrary, if the teaching of Christ be correct, to answer ill-will with good-will is the only sure way to establish peace and to restore security. Armies and navies do not make us safe, they make war probable, if not inevitable, sooner or later;

and war is a remedy which is always worse than the disease. Only good-will can make the world safe. If a man has consistently stood for righteousness and for good-will during the years of nominal peace, he need not be ashamed to go on standing for them during war-time.

There seem to be three main attitudes of Christians towards war. (1) That war in a just cause is right and sometimes a duty: war is a method which is good or bad according to the end for which it is used. (2) That war is unchristian and that Christians ought to put an end to it as soon as possible; but that this can only be done by common consent, and that in the meantime the Christian must stand with his countrymen in any war which is not flagrantly unjust. (3) That war is a method fundamentally inconsistent with the spirit and teaching of Christ, and that Christians ought to refuse to participate in it—the view expounded above. The second view is the prevalent view among Christians in this country.

See W. E. Wilson, *Christ and War*; Edward Grubb, *A True Way of Life*; C. J. Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War*, on the pacifist side. Against it see P. T. Forsyth, *The Christian Ethic of War*.

APPENDIX III

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

THE idea which is central to this book, that a gradual transformation of human society is possible, needs defence. It is not surprising that the recent war, and the disappointments which have followed it, should have shaken the easy optimism which was the philosophy of thousands of men and women who had never examined seriously the grounds of their hope, and that it should have strengthened the scepticism of the sceptically-minded. The whole idea of progress, one of the dominant ideas and the most powerful inspirations of the last century, is being subjected to heavy attack. Dean Inge, in his Romanes lecture, and also in more casual utterances, derides it as a mere superstition. Professor Bury, in his *The Idea of Progress*, declares it to be a parvenu among ideas. The temperamentally conservative, and all those who incline to pietism, are finding new support for their rooted disbelief in the likelihood of any considerable improvement of human nature and of human society. The fact of progress, the possibility of progress, and the hope of progress as an intrinsic

part of the Christian gospel are alike being challenged.

The first thing necessary, if there is to be any useful discussion of the subject, is a clearer idea as to what we mean by progress. That is to say, we must have decided what things are good and what things are bad in human life, and we must have a scale of values. Otherwise we have no standard of comparison to enable us to measure one age against another. We need, in short, an ideal of human life, and then we may be able to express an opinion as to whether human life as a whole is getting nearer to that ideal. An attempt is made in Chapter III to expound what I take to be the Christian ideal for human life.

The next question, supposing that there were some kind of agreement as to the ideal for human life—a large supposition—is a question mainly for historians. Looking back over the long stretches of history, can it be said that on the whole there has been an improvement in human life? It is not an easy question to answer. It is obvious enough that there has not been a steady movement towards better or worse; there have been great advances and there have been long and terrible regressions. Moreover, the comparison is not between the simple and the simple, but between the very complex and the very complex. Most of the comparisons which are made between age and age

are arrived at by isolating one or two aspects of human life or by considering some particular stratum of society, obviously an unsatisfactory method of comparison. But personally I feel little doubt what the considered verdict of the historians would be. I find it hard to read history and not to believe that on the whole human life has been getting better. If Mr. Wells's Time Machine could be actualised and the choice were given of emigration into the past or into the future, I am quite clear what my decision would be. And I believe that a large majority of those who have read at all widely would agree that on the whole the movement of human life has been upward.

The scientists can then be questioned. Do they find in science any strong reasons for belief or for disbelief in progress? I imagine that their answer will be that very great changes are possible, and do occur, both for better and for worse. There follows a further question. Does science teach that if a sufficiently long period be given, there must necessarily be progress? Dr. Fosdick, in his recent book, *Christianity and Progress*, quotes with contempt Herbert Spencer's dictum, "Progress is not an accident, not a thing within human control, but a beneficent necessity," and other sayings of that philosopher of similar tenor. But is it so certain that Herbert Spencer was wrong? Granted that progress is neither mechanical nor automatic, that

it can be impeded by human folly and by human sin, and perhaps by non-human choices, is the belief of the nineteenth century in the trend of the cosmic process towards something better such a superstition as many persons are now declaring it to have been? Was the mid-Victorian optimism based on an assumption which modern science does not qualify merely but condemns? I am not aware that any such verdict has been given. Professor L. T. Hobhouse comes to a different conclusion: "It is submitted, not in the least as a matter of faith, but as a sound working hypothesis, that the evolutionary process can be best understood as the effect of a purpose slowly working itself out under limiting conditions." [1]

And then for those of us who are Christians there comes the most important question of all. What is the teaching of our religion about the future of the human life on this planet? Social reformers for a good many years past have assumed very commonly that the hope of a gradual transformation of human society was an intrinsic part of the Christian gospel. Have they been wrong? We know that there have been other Christians, denying the likelihood of any considerable reformation

[1] *Development and Purpose*, p. 24. Quoted by C. Ellwood in *The Reconstruction of Religion*, Chapter V. See also an article on "Progress: Biological and other," by Julian Huxley in the *Hibbert Journal*, April 1923.

of human society by ethical process, and telling us that our schemes of social regeneration, for which we claim the sanctions of religion, find no warrant in the Bible.[1]

Let us note, first of all, with thankfulness that all Christians of every school are agreed as against pessimists that there is a great future for the human race, that we are not walking in a circle nor down a blind alley. We hope for glorious things because we believe in God. But we differ when we come to discuss what our hope is. Must the society, whose law is love and righteousness, be looked for in heaven only, or will it some day exist on earth? And if on earth, is it to come gradually and by the change in men's thoughts working itself out in changed external conditions, or is it to come suddenly and *ab extra?* The answer to these and to

[1] A view which is widely held, especially among those who believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, can be stated roughly as follows: The world is alienated from God and is bad, both human society and the non-human creation. (Appeal is made to such passages as John xvii. 6, 9, 14, 16; Romans viii. 22, and 1 John v. 19.) Individuals can be saved out of the wicked world, and when they are saved they will doubtless do what they can to help their fellow-men; their efforts will not be wasted, but we must form no great expectations. The world is not likely to get much better, indeed it is likely to get worse. (They quote 2 Timothy iii. and kindred passages.) At last Christ will come again and will suddenly inaugurate His Kingdom on earth. This view is based, in my judgment, partly on a misinterpretation of actual passages and partly on an unwarranted belief that the writers of the Bible were never mistaken.

kindred questions depends upon the interpretation of a number of very difficult and seemingly contradictory passages, and more particularly upon what we conceive to have been the thought of our Lord. Did He share the belief of His generation in an approaching cataclysmic ending of one age and ushering in of a kingdom of righteousness? Or did He believe that human society would be transformed gradually by a process of spiritual growth? It is easy enough to find passages in support of both these views. Many fine scholars are at work on the problems of eschatology, and we hope that from their labours there will come new light upon the mind of Christ.[1] In the meantime it is eminently a subject upon which it would be rash for the layman to say much. But I should have thought, if one layman may express an opinion with great diffidence, that our Lord's teaching indicated both a gradual process and a sudden unexpected climax to it.

[1] The literature of the subject is very large. Charles' *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life* is among the most scholarly books on the subject. For a clear popular handling of it see Manson's *Christ's View of the Kingdom of God*.

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